BR

# Commentary

Volume Sixty-two, Number Six, December 1976

## Seeing China Plain

Edward N. Luttwak

## A Mirror for Presidents

Forrest McDonald

How "Partisan Review" Began / William Phillips

The Making of a Dissident / Efim Davidovich

Race and Truth / Michael Novak

Koestler's Jewish Problem / Edward Grossman

| Movies | Books in Review | Theater |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ophuls: Justice Misremembered<br>Dorothy Rabinowitz | David Herbert Donald<br>Hyam Maccoby<br>Joseph Shattan<br>Barry Wallenstein<br>Bruce Kovner | Brechtian Papp<br>Jack Richardson |

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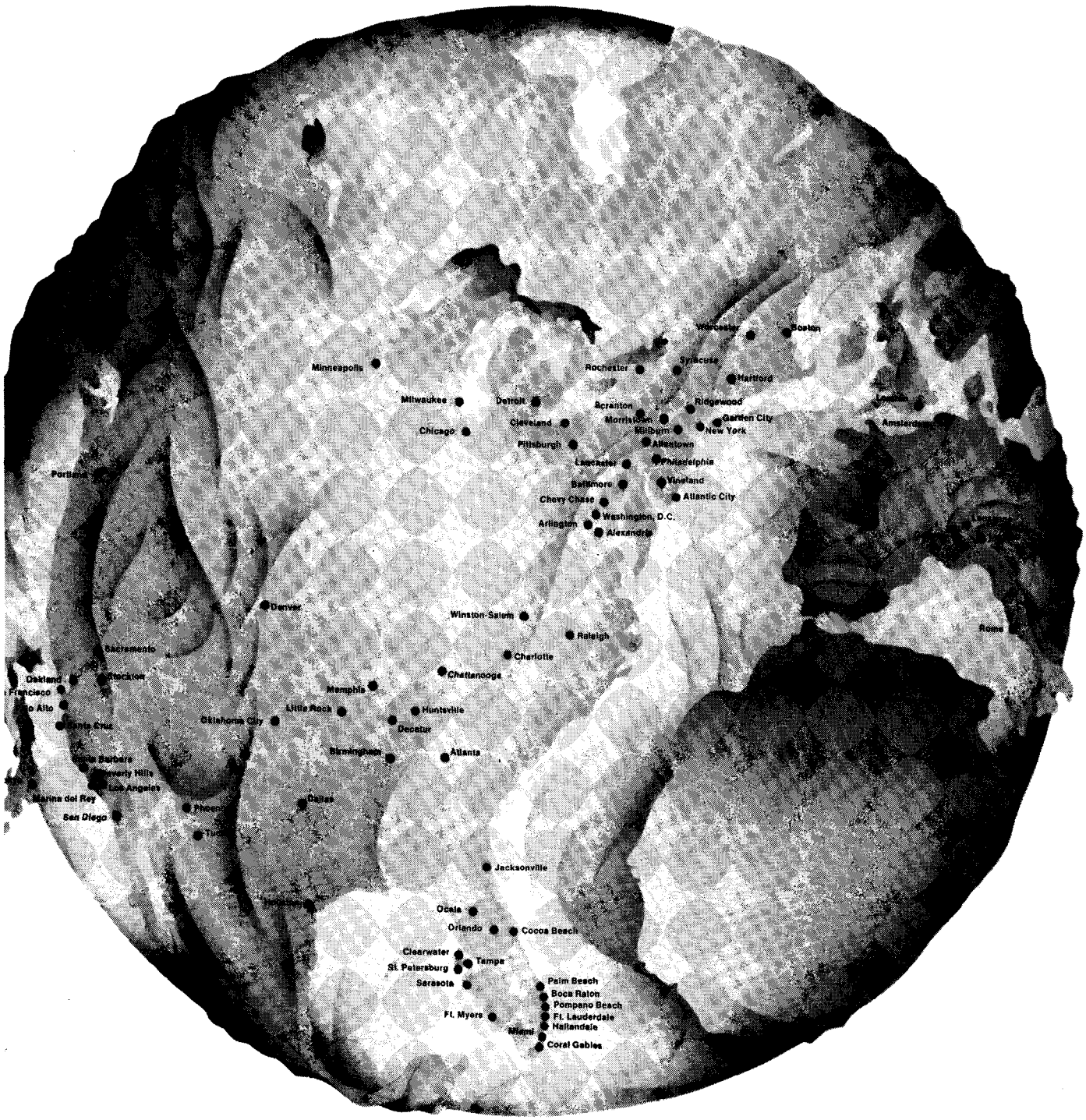


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# Commentary

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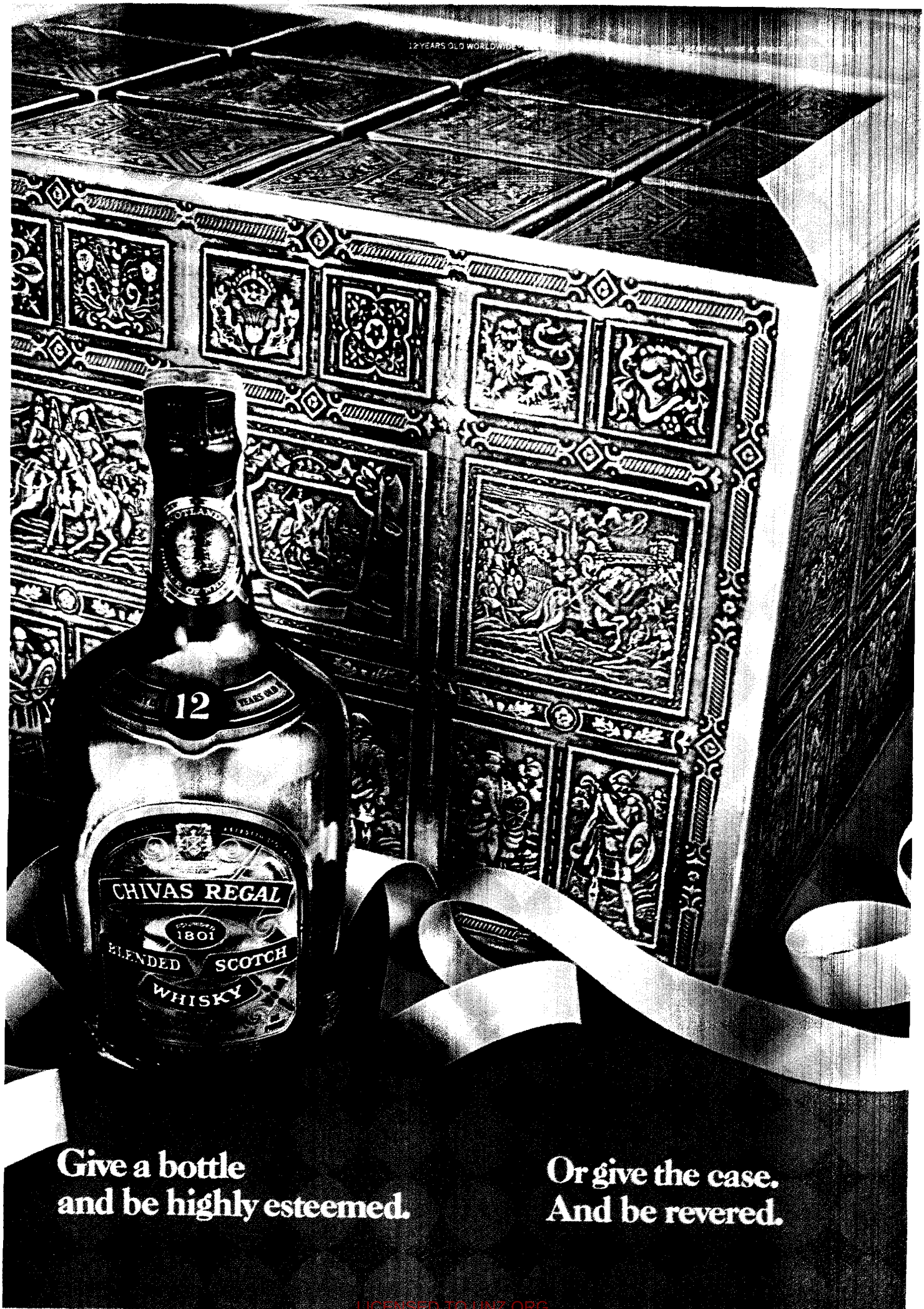


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### A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

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# Letters from Readers

## The Question of Abortion

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Magda Denes ["Performing Abortions," October], ostensibly writing in a purely descriptive vein about "how people involved in the performing of legal abortions feel about the work they do," adroitly presents the abortion question in such a way as to provoke guilt in the reader who is in favor of legalized abortion.

Though she pays verbal tribute to the unwed pregnant woman's right to choose not to carry to term, especially if that young woman is a pregnant, exploited twelve-year-old child, she nevertheless subtly lays the groundwork for one's sense of revulsion at the abortion concept, beginning with one's concern for the physical suffering and panic-like anguish endured by the "patient" undergoing this experience. Thus, while one learns that the procedure is extremely efficient, safe, and relatively painless, graphic descriptions of long needles, syringes, and injections into the young girl's vulnerable body scream forth the opposite message. Granted that tonsillectomy, appendectomy, or even hysterectomy do not involve parallel issues of terminating a fetus, one would not present an argument for or against these procedures on the basis of the patient's fears about the prepping or the operation. And let us be very clear about the fact that this article presents an argument—albeit veiled—and that Dr. Denes is a potential opinion-maker writing in a prestigious opinion-making magazine. For we deal here with a politicized issue where informed citizens are asked to take a pro or con position in order to promote legislation which either permits or prohibits abortion.

Therefore, since the hospital Dr. Denes visited also handles abortions prior to a gestation period of sixteen weeks, why are such (admittedly less dramatic) situations never once mentioned as comprising an important piece of the total picture?

There is no doubt that every woman who opts for abortion experiences, among a myriad of conflicting emotions, ambivalence, guilt, and a real sense of loss. And in the population Dr. Denes describes, it is precisely the deep, unmet needs to love and to feel loved during each traumatic life span which coalesced to produce the pregnancy. But by recognizing the existence and validity of these emotional states, it nowhere follows that legalized abortion is "wrong." . . .

Most illuminating for making Dr. Denes's case is the portrayal of her encounter with the contents of the paper buckets—"the type in which one buys fried chicken from take-home stores"—again, a subtle allusion to the inhumanity of the entire process, and, on a deeper psychological level, a hint of potential cannibalistic impulses involved. The semi-humorous, pathos-laden analogy to the fetal pig gives way to Dr. Denes's final, unabashed pitch, describing what she sees as "a small naked person . . . tragic victim . . . drowning . . . purple with bruises . . . died for his mother's sake." How much more clearly can she call pro-abortionists murderers?

Dr. Denes had obviously found her "measure of clarity" long before; though her struggles have not been completely resolved . . . —as no one's can who sincerely grapples with this problem—would it not be better to declare more openly where she stands?

HELGA WEISS TANENBAUM
Jackson Heights, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Magda Denes illustrates graphically the extent to which our culture has forsaken Judeo-Christian ethics for expediency, paganism, and relativism . . . .

JAMES C. CARPER
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Magda Denes's article underlines how painful it is to formulate one's views on the issue of abortion. It might be useful, therefore, to consider whether the liberal perspective offers us any guidelines in deciding this difficult question.

If evidence leads reasonable people to regard a would-be victim as perhaps a human being, then the liberal benefit of the doubt goes to the possibility that the victim is human. . . . Since abortion evidence does lead people to regard the unborn as perhaps human, liberal benefit of the doubt should go to the humanity of the unborn.



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When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: But when I became a man, I put away childish things. — *I Corinthians*

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Similarly, if a free adult's deeds lead a would-be victim into a vital dependency, then liberal policy is guided by the principle of protecting the dependent. . . . In non-rape pregnancy, a free adult's deed . . . leads the unborn into a vital dependency. Therefore, liberal policy should be to protect the dependent unborn. . . .

GEORGE STEVEN SWAN
Columbus, Ohio

MAGDA DENES writes:

I was very saddened by Helga Weiss Tanenbaum's letter. That even an obviously articulate, committed, and intelligent woman should misunderstand the issue so much is, I think, an ominous sign of our times.

Some of the points she raises I can answer quite directly. My opinions are not "slanted," "veiled," and "hidden." I do think abortion is murder—of a very special and necessary sort. What else would one call the deliberate stilling of a life? And no physician involved with the procedure ever kids himself about that. Whether by means of suction or surgery, saline solution or hysterotomy, abortion involves the undoing of a potential human who if not interfered with could flourish at least until the moment of birth. And yes, witnessing the interruption of life again and again—the numbers mounting into the thousands—does bring with it a "sense of revulsion." More than that. It brings with it a sense of horror and feelings of grief. Because all of us human beings very much need the belief that the world will be preserved beyond our life span, that it will be safeguarded and handed over to a next generation. The staff of the abortion hospital, whom I observed and interviewed, understands this and in different voices echoes the sentiment over and over.

As to my "subtle allusion to the inhumanity of the entire process"—Miss Tanenbaum again misinterprets me. I think of abortion as a very painful, very paradoxical, exclusively human dilemma embedded in our tragic condition of limited freedoms and total responsibilities. Also I know of no other species which voluntarily aborts.

What is ominous in Miss Tanenbaum's critique is her confusion between favoring abortion and favoring the freedom to choose to abort.

My own position is that abortion should be legal, and that women should be free to abort whenever they wish. But I also think that putting abortion on a legal-political plane is a way of avoiding its wrenching human implications.

Abortion is a private decision of dreadful daring whereby a woman's personal destiny is forged. But so long as the "pro-abortionist" woman must do battle against the government, or the church, or men, she can feel like a revolutionary heroine and not ever face her conflicts as internal. The same applies in reverse to the "right-to-life" women. If the state forbids, the church prohibits, and men frown, the unwanted child with whom she is saddled is not her responsibility or her choice. It is her martyrdom.

It is this aspect of the problem I was trying to shed light on, not the issue of legalization.

[*Additional correspondence on Magda Denes's article will appear next month.*—ED.]


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## What Is a Liberal—Who Is a Conservative?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Only Sidney Hook touches, very briefly, on a point about liberalism I would like to make in connection with your September symposium "What Is a Liberal—Who Is a Conservative?" Liberalism used to be based on the view of human nature in accordance with which people can *choose* to exercise their crucial capacities. In societies, however they might choose to thwart others' choices, so it is right to make provisions for discouraging such thwarting conduct. This prescription of "negative" freedom for all really exists (or should) because of the positive freedom we are all (except for borderline cases) capable of exercising.

With Hegel, Marx, and others who rejected the essential freedom of human beings yet still wanted to make use of the concept "freedom," the seed of modern liberalism began to grow. . . . Freedom now has come to mean enabling people to realize their essential humanity, something *they* have little but their environment has everything to do with. Thus, modern liberals "protect and preserve" liberty by trying

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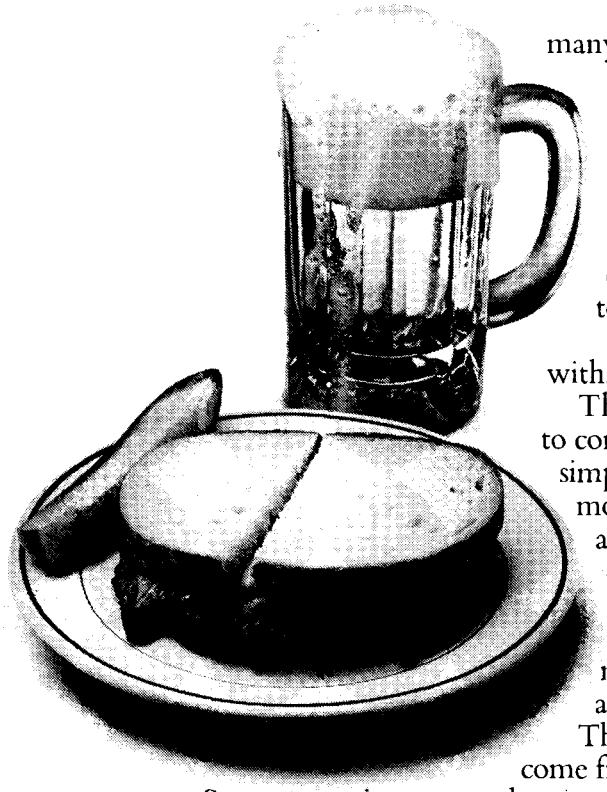

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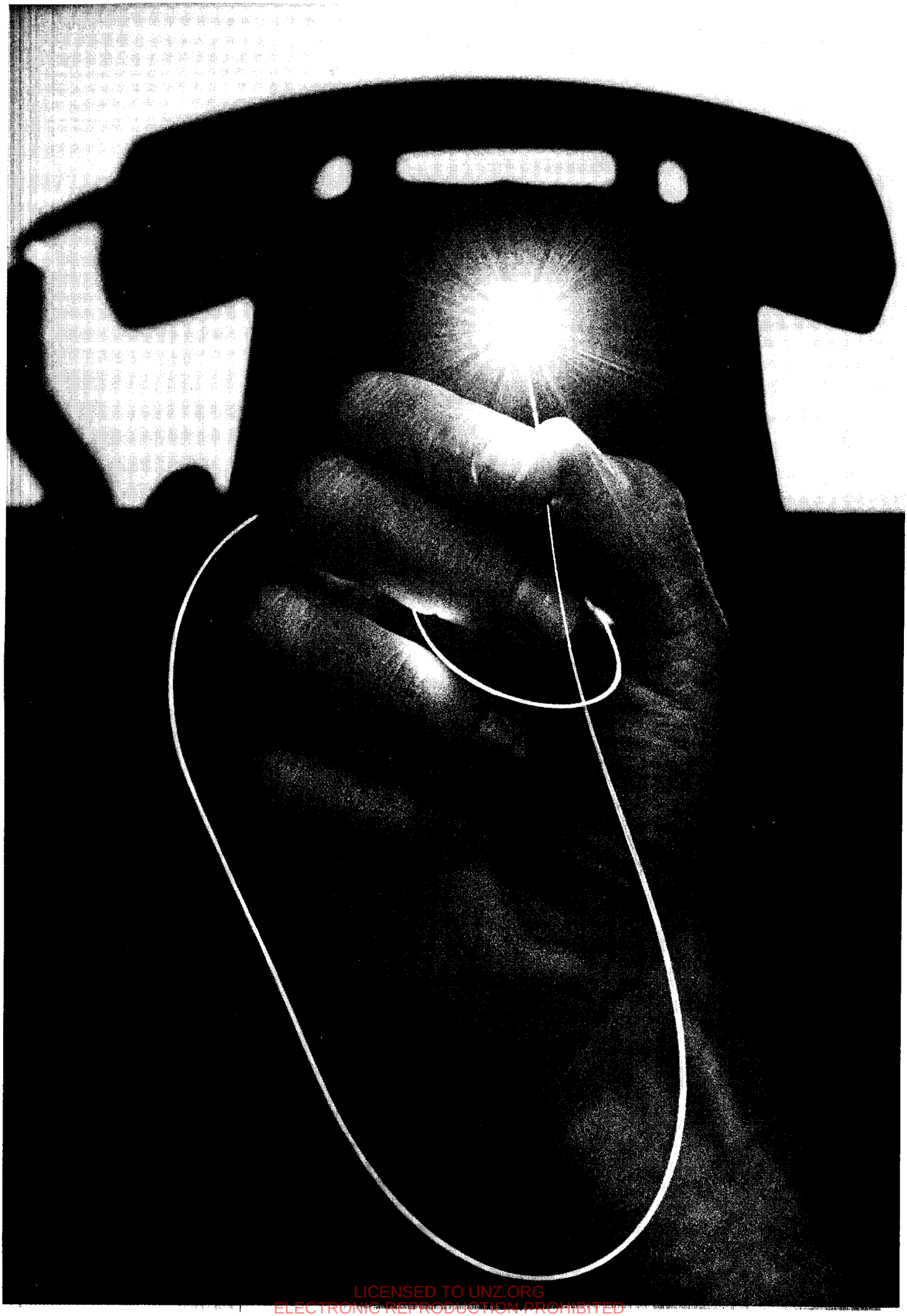

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# The Georgia Review

*Thirtieth Anniversary*
*Winter 1976*

*Essays*

"Poetic Crossing, II: American Stances" by Harold Bloom
"The Working Press, the Literary Culture, and the New Journalism" by Morris Dickstein
"Beckett: The Self at Zero" by Robert Langbaum
"*Barry Lyndon* Reconsidered" by Mark Crispin Miller
"John Taylor Arms: An American Mediaevalist" by S. W. Pelletier
"Professional Philosophy and Transcendentalist Culture" by Richard Rorty

*Fiction*

"Chicago" (an excerpt from his new novel *A Place to Come To*) by Robert Penn Warren

*Poems* by A. R. Ammons, Michael G. Cooke, Anthony Hecht, John Hollander, Jerome Mazzaro, James Merrill, John Peck, and Mark Strand

*Reviews* by David Bromwich, Nan Cooke Carpenter, Edward Doughtie, Jerome Mitchell, Ronald Paulson, and Joseph N. Riddel

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to arrange the environment so that it facilitates the realization of essential humanity on the part of those thought not to have realized it sufficiently to date.

Since people can choose, and human nature must be fully actualized by people of their own free will (within their context of environmental circumstances, including friends and, sometimes, relatives), the modern liberal's struggle is hopeless. He keeps his garb of compassion but reality keeps thwarting him over and over again. . . .

TIBOR R. MACHAN
Department of Philosophy
SUNY-Fredonia
Fredonia, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lionel Trilling once wrote that liberalism "sets great store by variousness and possibility." Dictionaries define liberalism as openness and tolerance. But where dictionaries supply precise meaning, ideologies tend to surround ideas with confusion. This has happened to liberalism. And it has happened most recently in New York, where a traditionally liberal Democratic party chose its candidate for the Senate . . . from a field of contenders that included all varieties of Democratic liberalism. Such a selection, in itself, coincides with Trilling's belief. Diversity, however, has led to factionalism, resulting in a debate that has been brewing for some time as to which faction represents the true spirit of traditional liberalism. . . .

Though only a few of the contributors to the symposium . . . mention it, the nebulous word neoconservative is, I believe, of legitimate, if not prime, concern in this debate. The word, taken literally, has nothing to do with a change in conservative attitudes, but refers to a change of consciousness in a group of liberals. Neoconservatism is the label which has been applied to certain elements of the Democratic party by newer, though not always younger, members. But after close examination it becomes clear that this term is misapplied and is not an accurate description of a shift in ideologies. . . . Prior to World War II, for example, to be ultra-conservative was to support legislation designed to control the powers of the President for military intervention. When the very same issue was taken up by liberals only a decade ago, was it not the case that time, and its changes, had altered the perceptions of those wh now sought to limit presidenti powers? The reasons for the shi had to have been similarly altere I like Max Lerner's explanation:

> Over a span of years the angles o political vision—for that is wha liberal, conservative, Left, Righ amount to—are bound to have a changing content. They are way of perceiving the political and socia reality, but if the reality does somer saults so will the perception of it.

With respect to ideologies, tim changes the perceptions of issue not the perceivers. It would be l dicrous to call pre-World War I conservatives neoliberals. . . .

One need not look too hard a Democratic and Republican pla forms over the years to see that th early ideas of Federalism and ant Federalism are still present toda What can be confusing, however, i the fact that the nature of a parti ular time renders certain issues th cause either of liberals or of cor servatives. But words notwithstanc ing, . . . it is the *idea* that count this is the historical constant. Fo one to make a genuine chang from liberalism to conservatism change of consciousness would hav to take place . . ., yet I know of n alleged neoconservative who ha undergone such a change. Change of mind, yes. This is where th problem lies. Note Nathan Glazer' bewilderment, referred to severa times in the symposium, when . . in 1970 he called himself a mil conservative. But he was the sam Nathan Glazer. . . .

I should add that liberalism find no inconsistency in believing in tra ditionally liberal domestic cause and supporting a Jackson Amend ment. They are separate issue Much less do I believe that suc views are best described as neocon servative. If there is liberal an conservative convergence on a issue, might it not be possible tha such a view, very simply, is correct And if a liberal changes his min on an issue, say busing, is it some thing other than liberal to admit i and explain why? Not according t Trilling's definition.

JOHN J. Co
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY

According to notions so labori ously synthesized by so many illus trious names in the Septembe issue of COMMENTARY, I guess

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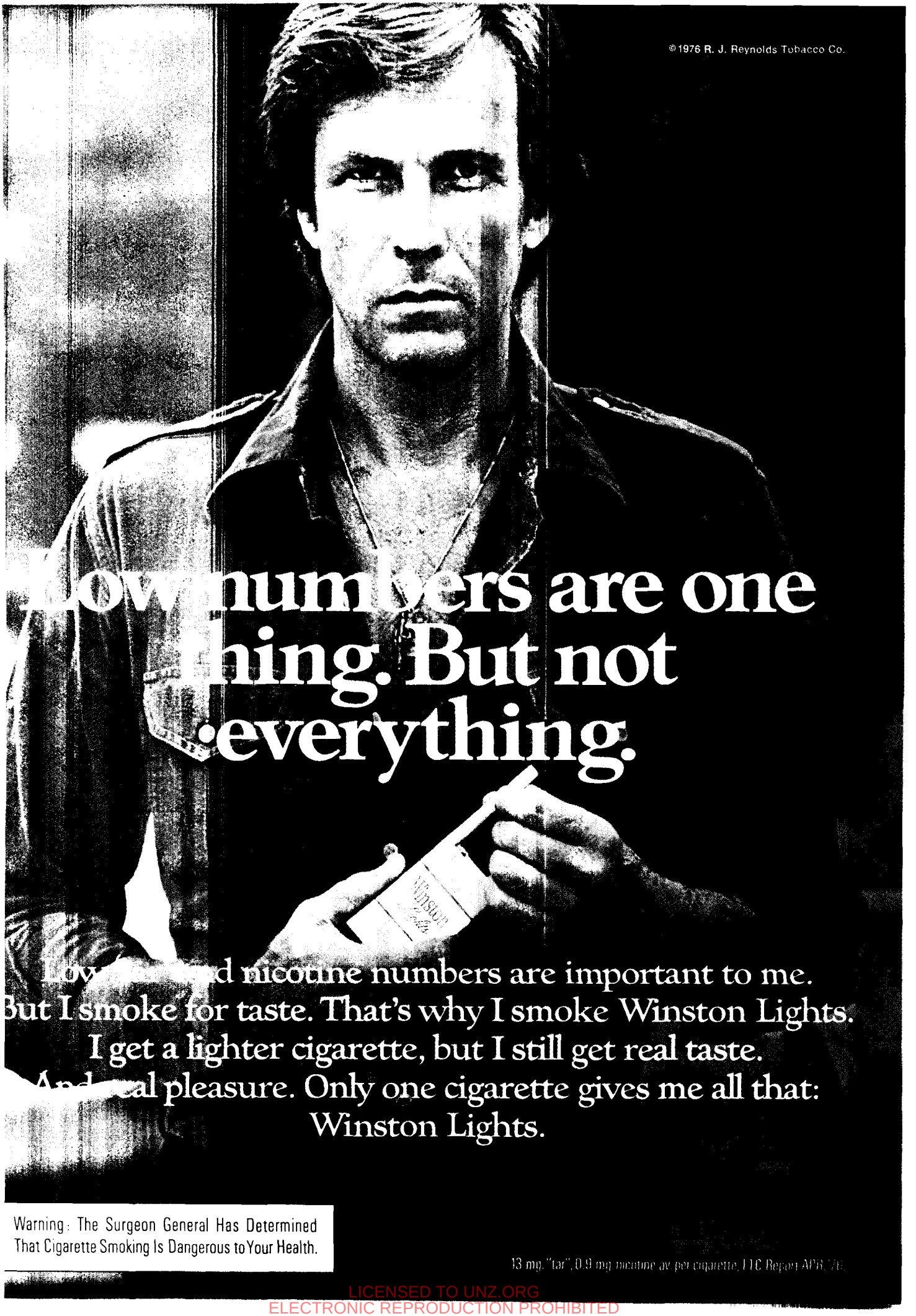
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have to consider myself a conservative, although it is news to me. Whenever I expound what I think and feel, in print or in conversation, a verdict follows: he's a conservative. When I ask what that means, I'm synoptically informed that I'm against the blacks and a pawn of big business. Which obviously conflicts with the facts: I wrote an admiring book on blues poetry, which I consider one of the century's magnificent achievements, and I have always supported myself by manual or cerebral toil, which fits the Marxist definition of a proletarian. I too consider myself a man of reason, in conformity with John Locke's, Lord Acton's, and William Ropke's sense of the word —that is, one who believes that the most inherent content of freedom is neither sensual nor emotional but rational. This is why in Europe I was called a liberal, and often not without a contemptuous grin.

In the newly formed Rockford College Institute we try to bring some order into the interplay of denominations which seem marooned in the American ideological galaxy. This is why anyone who wishes to abuse our good intentions sees us as either too liberal or too conservative, but never sufficiently reasonable.

LEOPOLD TYRMAND
Rockford College Institute
Rockford, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The symposium on the modern uses and misuses of the terms liberal and conservative was quite worthwhile. However, I was surprised to find an almost universal failure to distinguish between the classical form of continental liberalism, as created by Rousseau, Saint-Simon, and others, and the very different form of American liberalism created by the Federalists and their allies (although the essays by Robert Nisbet, Sidney Hook, and Robert L. Bartley made implicit use of the distinction. . .). Just as historians have generally recognized that America's revolutionaries were very conservative revolutionaries, especially in comparison with the French Jacobins, so must we remember that America's liberals, who represented a synthesis of British conservatives and liberals, were very conservative liberals.

Originally, all liberals, whether continental, British, or American, shared one basic idea. As Rousseau put it in *Emile*: "The greatest good is not authority, but liberty." Their common goal was liberty, or freedom, hence the word "liberalism." But the continentals and the British . . . soon divided into two radically different streams of thought and action.

Rousseau and the continentals had great faith in the powers of reason or rationalism and . . . believed that all human beings were equal in liberty and in the basic goodness of human nature. But, most fatefully, they also believed that man was "infinitely malleable" by social institutions and that, therefore, man could be made free and his inherent equality realized only by social institutions . . . . The crucial demand was for "the total surrender of each individual with all his rights to the whole community" (Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Vol. 3). . . . In short, Rousseau and those who followed him believed that the inherent goodness of man, his powers of reason, and his malleability to socialization would lead to total freedom and equality if only each person would first surrender to the general will of man. This surrender would lead to a democratic state which would then guarantee and protect all individual rights.

The British liberals started and ended with an analysis of individual actors in the concrete social world. While they too believed in the powers of reason, they were profoundly empirical and practical (or pragmatic). . . . Beginning with Locke, they were distrustful of any grand social schemes to free, perfect, or otherwise improve individual human beings. Their primary commitment was to restricting the powers of any government because such powers restricted the rights of individuals. Rather than being the instrument of human freedom, government power was the enemy of freedom and the corrupter of man. British conservatives agreed with the liberals' intense empiricism and practicality, but they had a far greater distrust of rationalism. Burke argued that man's reason could not comprehend the vast complexity of society and that any social order must come about naturally, organically, from the ground up. Most importantly, he believed that all powers of government must be checked by other powers or individual freedoms would be destroyed. . . .

The intensely practical experience of the Americans, their pluralism, and their individualism made them natural allies of the British liberals and natural enemies of the continental, romantic liberals. In America, the mix of liberal and conservative ideas was complex. Like Burke himself, the Americans agreed completely with the British liberals about the need for almost total individual freedom in the economic sphere—property and individual initiative were basic rights in themselves and natural checks on the growth of government powers over individuals. But in matters of government the Americans agreed much more with the British liberals than with Burke—freedom was more important than authority. Still, they had no doubt about the necessity of a natural social order based on shared ideas of morality . . . . But their overwhelming approach to the central government was to keep it small and weak. . . .

Through a long and vastly complex history, modern American liberalism was transformed into Rousseauian romantic, continental liberalism . . . . Our original conservative liberalism was constructed specifically for a pluralistic, individualistic, and free society, and it worked for a long time. Rousseauian liberalism was constructed for a vastly different kind of society, France, but it never worked even for that society; it became, instead, a major source of the Jacobin terror which "freed" so many Frenchmen of their lives and prepared the way for the "general will" expressed by Bonapartism. But, of course, none of this matters to modern "liberals." After all they are just as uninterested in empiricism and practicality as were their continental progenitors . . .

JACK D. DOUGLAS
Department of Sociology
University of California
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Few contributors to the liberal/conservative symposium have anything flattering to say about either term, with the word liberal attracting the most scorn. I would not contest the fact that liberal has become a hackneyed symbol, but it has become so only because it has been one of the most serviceable drafthorses in the history of ideas. . . . Yet "liberal" cannot be dissected away from the intellectual and emotive freight

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which, were the word to be struck from the language, another symbol would have to bear. It is futile to castigate a symbol because of the perplexing repercussions it arouses within us. The ambiguities are not semantic, they are real. (Does charity cause dependency? When are quotas fair?) The riddles inhere in the human spirit and are inescapable in any social organization. We need the . . . power of labels like "liberal" to find or impose order on the blooming, buzzing confusion of the raw material of social phenomena.

Restless reformers can be expected, sooner or later, to challenge the most conservative of human institutions, language itself. They would expunge not only venerable terms like liberal and conservative, but the dichotomy between them as well. Indeed, liberals are not alarmed at what seems to be the erosion of a number of other eristic dichotomies such as once were assumed between man and woman, youth and age, rich and poor, clever and dull. In questioning the distinction between man and woman, they salute the infertility cult, now almost pandemic; . . . they welcome modern technology which makes irrelevant the sexual differences in muscular strength; and they incite both erstwhile genders to hanker after masculine prerogatives and shun feminine ones. Directing their attention to youth and age, many liberals reject the wisdom of the old and confer the vote and unemployment compensation on adolescents. They are pleased . . . that the civil war between whites and blacks is coming to an end. When liberals turn their thoughts to the rich and poor, they are complacent that our affluence has relegated the poor to a dwindling and consistently outvoted minority. When they weigh the clever against the dull, they find the dull merely disadvantaged. . . .

Liberals understand that only the unchanging changes. They cherish the basic form of society and wish only to re-form it. . . . Yet how is any change possible? Government is by definition power incarnate and institutions are vested interests. Mutations do not take place in the body politic. The meek cannot inherit the earth. How can we make the poor rich without endangering our most precious shared values? . . . A trickle-up program dispenses too much money to too many people, is inflationary, and demoralizes the poor but trickling-down is immoral because it enriches the wealthy. Living so close to these paradoxes, liberals cannot function epistemologically or logically. They must be impassioned by envy of the rich or pity for the poor. Or by shame. Or by *ressentiment*.

Liberals are also unfair to politicians, extorting extravagant promises which they know cannot be fulfilled. After the victim is elected and in office they feel entitled to take revenge upon him in the media and in private carping. Furthermore, they give elected officials conflicting instructions: to provide more benefits and lower taxes. The inevitable failures are loaded on the heads of our representatives who are used as concrete symbols of our nondescript sins. Our leaders may or may not be good, but it is certain that we are poor followers. . . .

BOB GREENBAUM
Norristown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY

The "group of American intellectuals" chosen to define, or confuse, the meanings of liberal and conservative appears to represent almost exclusively the Eastern establishment. Two states account for about half of them, and one city, a fourth. Am I to assume this is a scientific, "harrised," "gallupping," "quotafied" sample, and thus that the Eastern establishment really has cornered the brain market? If so, the news therefrom would indicate that the crucial shortage in this country is not intelligence but integrity. . . .

T.L. PATRICK
New Orleans, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY

Eugene D. Genovese writes "The challenge to American capitalism [i.e., to liberalism] will have to come from a socialist Left. . . At issue is the restoration of America's place as a leader of the forces in the world that stand for the reconciliation of freedom and social justice. A capitalist America may be able to impose upon the world a nuclear war ostensibly in opposition to Soviet totalitarianism but suicide and mass murder are poor instruments of reform." But has America, with its two-decade record of steady retreat, shown either a willingness or an ability to lead the forces of the free world

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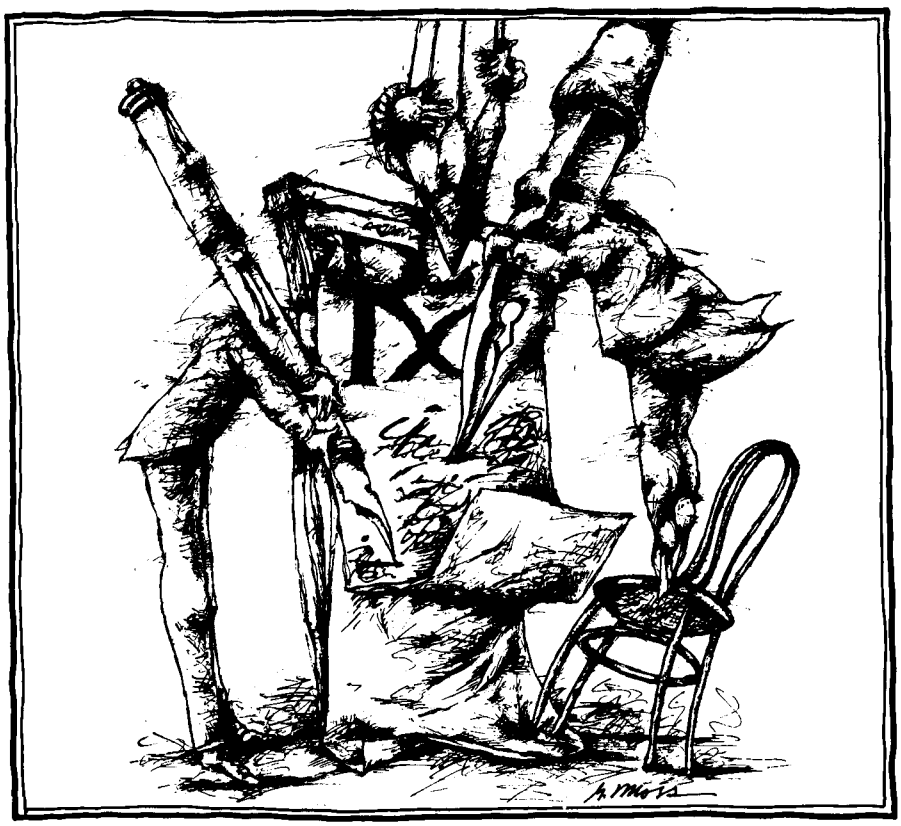


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against totalitarian advance? Witness Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, Angola. . . .

DeWitt S. Snell
Schenectady, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . The progressive social programs of the 60's have spawned a virtual cottage-industry of conservative criticism, yet most liberals are as willing as their conservative colleagues to concede the failures of the Great Society or the New Frontier. But . . . genuine liberalism should manifest itself, I think, in a rededication to basic goals.

No one doubts that the minimum-wage law, while well-intentioned, has in many instances actually increased unemployment among minority young. Nor was the "Green Revolution" a godsend. By relying less on labor-intensive farming than on mass mechanization, it actually put many of India's poor out of work while it increased the price of grain so much that these newly unemployed could no longer afford to buy what they had previously produced themselves. Then, too, these new strains required extensive use of fertilizers, and no one had anticipated the oil crisis or OPEC. . . .

A litany of similarly flawed liberal initiatives is potentially endless . . . . Of course . . . to fault the performance is not to invalidate the effort, and we still desperately need efforts aimed at society's disadvantaged and dispossessed. If specific programs have proved unsuccessful, the answer is not to abandon the search for solutions, but rather to find more effective means of meeting the same ends.

True, liberals are traditionally all too eager to embark upon crusades. Realism and restraint must guide and temper their actions. . . . [But] the problems are immense, both at home and abroad. Today's world presents us with a vast panorama of privation and despair; millions know untold misery and suffering. The complacency of conservatism has no place in such critical times, nor can we afford to be anything less than skeptical about the ministers of the "new minimalism" (e.g., Jerry Brown). Instead, we must take afresh to the field, recognizing that we shall always fall somewhat short of the goal . . . .

Steve Osterman
Yale College
New Haven, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . It was their acceptance of ideology that caused problems for the liberals. To many Americans ideology is seen . . . as a sort of disease. As someone I know put it: "If they shoot a guy in Chile, the liberals tell me that I should get upset; if they shoot a guy in Cuba, I should ignore it. What sort of . . . morality is that?" . . .

The kind of common sense that was so much a part of George Orwell's writings has been noticeably absent from liberal ideology over the last decade. . . . A liberal today is someone whose social concerns rise in proportion to his income and who, as a result, is guaranteed protection from the results of his own policies. . . .

Mike Lavelle
*Chicago Tribune*
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

The trouble with the intellectuals in your symposium is that they eschew the facts and espouse words. Actually, it is the easiest thing in the world to distinguish between the liberal and the conservative and to define the place each holds in our society.

A liberal is one who has the interests of all the people at heart.

A conservative is one who not only conserves but seeks to enlarge the wealth of the wealthy and particularly of big business, and does so even though recurrent periods of inflation and high unemployment bring acute suffering to multitudes.

It is not my purpose to attempt to denigrate big business. Far from it; the nation owes a debt of infinite gratitude to the outpouring of consumer goods that has given us the highest standard of living in the world. Those who perform that miracle of production are genuinely brilliant; indeed, they have more than a touch of genius in their operations. . . .

Why then do they now and then pursue the suicidal course adopted through the ages by kings, czars, and emperors who have fallen by the wayside? I was puzzled about this until I heard a statement by an eminent psychiatrist. He said it was possible for a person to be brilliant in all areas but one, and in that area to be so mentally deficient as to approach a state of lunacy.

That cleared things up for me. It brought to mind the lunacy of that arch-conservative, Herbert Hoover, who was telling the country that prosperity was just around the corner when at that very time ruined millionaires were selling apples on the streets or jumping out of windows.

It required a liberal sprung from a wealthy, aristocratic family to save us then from a threatening revolution, for the farmers in the previously ultra-conservative Middle West were arming themselves. But instead of expressing thanks to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the financial wizards refused even to mention his name. . . .

Now again we have inflation, for when a labor union obtains a wage increase of, let us say, 5 per cent, prices are raised perhaps 8 per cent. It is proper to raise prices when costs rise, but a grave menace to the nation to exceed a fair increase.

Perhaps Jimmy Carter can lead us out of the morass. He will need to muster the combined resources of all our liberals in order to overcome the massive strength of the conservatives. It will not be an easy task, but it is a most urgently needed one.

Charles Roland
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Chet Huntley once said on the air that a conservative is one who uses the clichés of the 20's as principles, and a liberal is one who uses the principles of the 30's as clichés.

He said it in the 50's.

Reuven Frank
NBC News
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

It was not Eugene Debs who was the candidate of the Socialist party in the presidential election of 1916 as I wrote in my symposium contribution, but Allan L. Benson. I once knew that, but over the years the association of Eugene Debs with American socialism before World War I pushed to the side this small bit of factual information.

Edward Shils
Committee on Social Thought
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

## Jews and Arabs

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joan Peters's account . . . of the mistreatment of Jews in the Arab countries ["An Exchange of Populations," August] is bound to

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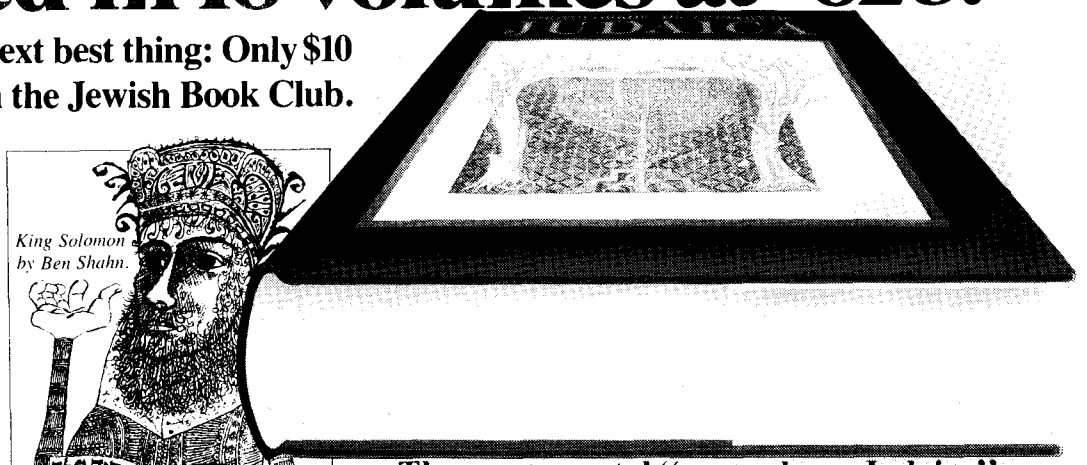

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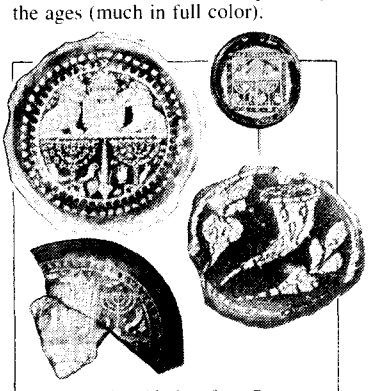

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arouse sympathy. Yet to someone who has an academic interest in the subject, Miss Peters's article is one-sided and superficial; and for the sake of balance, . . . I would like to respond.

First, while anti-Semitic literature as revealed in Arab children's textbooks is deplorable, equally deplorable is the spread of similar literature in Israeli children's books. Consider the article in *Ha'aretz* (September 20, 1974) in which the author points out: "Dozens of children's books published in Israel encourage their readers to hatred and contempt for the Arabs. . . ."

Consider, along similar lines, the findings of Dr. Georges Tamarin, the Israeli social-psychologist, who discovered in his work on prejudice that Oriental children's hatred of the Arabs far exceeded that of their parents. . . .

Or consider the following conclusion reached by three psychologists from McGill University in Montreal concerning Jewish children's perception of the Arabs: "It appears that Arabs were rated lower on nearly all traits, significantly more so on courage, good looks, intelligence, good-naturedness, pleasantness, manners, truthfulness, successfulness, self-confidence, permissiveness, reliability, leadership, cheerfulness, and capacity for hard work." . . .

Second, concerning the exodus of Iraqi Jews, it is true, as Miss Peters notes, that there was a pogrom in Iraq in 1941. Yet this episode, encouraged by the pro-Nazi prime minister of the time, Rashid Ali al-Kaylani, cannot be considered either representative or typical of the life experience of Iraqi Jews, as pointed out in a 1972 Israeli Black Panther publication. Surely, the account given by Miss Peters doesn't explain the affluence of Iraqi Jews, which even she admits in passing, nor does it acknowledge the influence Iraqi Jews exercised in the political life of that country (almost every Iraqi government prior to 1948 had a Jewish minister). This is more than one could say about Israel, a country where the Arabs comprise 14 per cent of the population. . . .

Finally, although it is deplorable that Jews, Christians, or anybody else cannot enter certain Arab countries because of religious criteria, it is equally deplorable that the Palestinian Arabs are prevented from going back to their homeland. . . .

ELIA ZUREIK
Department of Sociology
Queens University
Kingston, Ontario

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an Israeli from Iraq, I wish to differ with Joan Peters's assessment of past relations between Arabs and Jews. In my study of the *dhimmi* ("protected peoples"), I found that the status of the Jews was, to quote Bernard Lewis, "rooted in tradition, respected by law and custom, and effectively maintained," thus enabling them "to survive and at times to flourish."

I am further concerned that Miss Peters's article scarcely does justice to the achievements of Jews in Muslim lands, and gives the impression that Jews were little more than a humiliated minority. Such was not the case. Indeed, Miss Peters seems to contradict herself by suggesting that the property exchange was "to the benefit of the Arabs, who confiscated Jewish-held assets in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and elsewhere." The question thus arises: is it conceivable that a continuously persecuted minority should have been better off economically than the Palestinian Arabs? . . .

RITA ZEMACH BRAUDE
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Joan Peters's article with great interest. Although I have nc serious disagreement with one o her major points—that Jews ir Muslim nations have been discrimi nated against for centuries—I think that several clarifications and corrections need to be made.

First, the treatment of Jews by Muslims during the Middle Ages and later was either no worse and was often better, than the treatment of Jews by Christians in Europe. Perhaps the best example of this is the flight during the Inquisition of 150,000 Jews to North Africa, where they found sanctuary under Muslim rulers (Doris Bensimon-Donath, *Evolution du Judaisme Marocain. . .*).

While it is undeniably true tha Jews were consigned to the second

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# Seeing China Plain

*Edward N. Luttwak*

It was not until we reached the "Sinkiang-Uighur autonomous region" in the far northwest corner of China that the elegant stage-management of our journey, which had begun in mid-September, finally broke down.

In China proper, and even in Tibet, our hosts sustained a passable verisimilitude as we went from place to place, visiting communes, army units, factories, and the sights. Each visit was obviously prepared carefully in every detail, but that seemed natural enough, given the decidedly formal character of our whole tour, which was official in all but name (since it was led by former Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger). Riding each in our own car, numbered in convoy in strict order of precedence, with an interpreter and a personal escort assigned in strict order of seniority, we would arrive at village, workshop, army base, or hospital to be met by the local dignitaries, themselves lined up in strict order of precedence. First came the briefing, given in a reception room decorated with the standard set of portraits—Marx, Engels, Stalin, and Mao. While tea was served in the official-pattern cups in use all over China, we would hear the story of the institution from the bad old days of the Kuomintang to the sunny present, with identical phraseology used to describe each phase —Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the rest.

At the particular time of our visit the campaign of the hour was still aimed at the fallen premier, Teng Hsiao-p'ing. Hence everywhere we went, from the New China University in Peking to a Tibetan commune, the briefing would conclude with the slogan: "We must deepen the criticism of the right-deviationist attempt of Teng Hsiao-p'ing to reverse the correct verdicts of the Cultural Revolution." (The amateur Sinologists in our group attached significance to the fact that in some places the phrase would be given in full, while elsewhere the "correct verdicts" would be left hanging, with "of the Cultural Revolution" left unspoken.) After the briefing, we would walk around commune, workshop, barrack, or laboratory to observe "the work in progress."

As simulations of real life, these controlled glimpses were comparable to inspection parades by top army brass; except that in our case it was not only the shine on the boots and the gleam of rifle barrels that was suspect, but the boots and barrels themselves—as normal issue items, that is. When shown a computer in the New China University, were we seeing the only computer, or one of many, as our guides insisted? But the single item could be revealing also. Processions of uncritical, untaught Americans had spoiled our hosts, and they had become careless. In the very hospital that James Reston praised with such abandon a few years ago, we were all x-rayed by a machine which was recognized as dangerously unshielded by one of our group; another could recognize a primitive analog calculator when shown the university's "computer."

But with a population fully controlled, with very experienced briefing dignitaries who had already performed for dozens of Western delegations, and with the constant influence of our hosts' exquisite courtesy upon us, there was a tendency to accept the stage-management as part of the stately formalities of our tour. Mr. Ting Yuan-hung, head of the American desk at the Chinese Foreign Office and my assigned escort, employed the car rides to and from in order to flatter and to question. Well-briefed on my background and experience, he would ask his questions in casual fashion, and it was only after two or three days that a clear pattern emerged, and the Intelligence motive came to the surface. In the meantime such steady interest in one's views was undeniably gratifying.

In Sinkiang, however, neither stage-management nor in the end courtesy could survive the intrusion of reality. Always in theory part of the Chinese empire, but rarely under effective imperial rule, Sinkiang is inhabited in equal measure by newly settled Chinese and by Turkic peoples, mainly Uighurs, a sedentary group of some culture, and by Khazaks, more primitive herders and farmers, as well as by Uzbeks and Khirgiz, all living alongside smaller minorities of diverse origin. As in Tibet, Chinese rule in the region is in every

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respect a colonial phenomenon, with an astonishing conformity to type except in one critical respect. Unlike the British in India or Africa, or even the French, the Chinese obviously can see no virtue in the survival of the local cultures, and still less in the survival of local religions. Chinese colonialism is therefore oppressive not merely politically but also culturally.

Thus in Tibet it was quite clear that the literacy promoted by the regime was in Chinese and not in Tibetan; in the surprisingly large bookshop we found in Lhasa, all the books were in Chinese, except for the "Little Red Book" of Mao's select quotations. No Tibetan records or posters were to be had, and the use of that ancient written language is now confined to the slogans on the walls and to some script on the locally-produced matchboxes. Nor can a Tibetan read any Buddhist texts, for none are available, old or new. The only manifestation of the native culture tolerated by the regime is Tibetan "revolutionary opera," whose texts are literally translated from Chinese originals, but whose music is native.

In Tibet we had seen the gentle and always exceedingly polite Chinese undergo a transformation into classic district-commissioner types. Their gestures became visibly more expansive, and their language with our local hosts quite clearly abrupt. Our escorts did not bother to hide their sniggers as we were served Tibetan yak-butter tea, and they acted out for us little wordless playlets of ridicule as we toured the altars of the one restored Tantric temple in Lhasa. I asked a Chinese official resident in Tibet since 1960 how to say "please" and "thank you" in Tibetan. He did not know. I asked him to translate "move," "go," and "faster." He knew.

THE same pattern of cultural suppression and overbearing personal conduct by Chinese officialdom was in evidence in Sinkiang, but there the locals are not submissive Tibetan Buddhists. They are Turks—proud, tough, and by no means cowed. The intense friction between Turks and Chinese was clearly manifest even in the very restricted circle of party cadres with which we came into contact. Fresh from the airport we went to see the Sinkiang Exhibition in the capital of the region, Urumchi, where I talked to an Uighur official of the reception committee in a mixture of Turkish and Arabic—he speaking the last two languages far better than I. This turned out to be my only genuine conversation with a Chinese citizen during the whole journey in China. The Uighur did not hesitate to speak, and volunteered illuminating comments on the inevitable official briefing which was being given as we toured the Exhibition. Several of our escorts repeatedly instructed the Uighur to stop this unauthorized conversation, which they could not monitor. They spoke to him as they would have spoken to a Tibetan, the tones of sharp command coming through even in Chinese. He simply refused to obey.

Over the next two days in Sinkiang every member of our group was to witness similar gestures of independence by native officials, minor perhaps but of great moment in an environment otherwise so totally controlled. In Urumchi we were lodged in the official guest house, in a walled and guarded compound many miles outside town. Hence we had no opportunity to see street life in the time left free to us, as we had done in Peking, Kweilin, and even in Lhasa. Here we would leave the compound to travel at high speed in convoy, never stopping as we crossed and recrossed Urumchi on our appointed round of visits. But it was only during the day when we flew to the Ili Valley, the remotest corner of Sinkiang, quite near Alma Ata and the Soviet Union and very far from Peking and China proper, that all pretense was finally abandoned as our hosts resorted to a nakedly physical insulation to keep us from local contact.

The Ili Valley had been the scene of grave border incidents in 1969 between the Chinese and the Russians. Just as the Chinese had clearly initiated the incidents on the Ussuri in Manchuria, a zone of operation conveniently near to their own centers of military power and a good four thousand miles from Moscow, in the Ili Valley it was the Russians who had taken the initiative, the area being within easy reach for them and impossibly remote for the Chinese. For this reason we had been especially keen to visit the area, and had insisted that it be included in our itinerary. In Washington the Chinese had agreed that we should visit the only town of any size in the Ili Valley, a city of 100,000 or so known as Kuldja to the natives and named I-ning by the Chinese.

In Kuldja newly-settled Chinese amount to half the population, but it was not Chinese who lined the streets as we drove around. The locals, mostly Khazaks who look much like Italians, left their workshops, homes, and farms to see the unique sight of Europeans like themselves riding in cars, in which only Chinese officials would normally be seen. The locals cheered and waved in a way that no Chinese crowd would do. Again and again we saw them gesture to each other by raising their hands to their faces. The sign-language was easy to interpret: we looked like *them*, we were not Chinese. The crowds were obviously unauthorized, and our Chinese escorts were soon in a state of panic, as more and more of the locals appeared in the narrow streets during hours in which all were supposed to be at work.

We never did see Kuldja except through the windows of our cars. We went from the airport compound to carpet, factory, shoe workshop, and local government compounds. When we made it clear that we wanted to go beyond the walls to stand in the streets and photograph the colorful old houses and the even more picturesque crowds,

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our escorts became hysterical, and soon announced that "because of weather conditions," we would have to leave Kuldja at once for the return flight to Urumchi.

On the way to the airport Mr. Ting, normally the most controlled of men, became quite rude, launching into a tirade which began with the accusation that I was not interested in the new China, only the old China. He, like the others, had clearly believed in official claims of the success of the party's nationality policy, as symbolized by the standard poster which shows Tibetans, Mongols, Turks, and others in minority costumes looking up adoringly at the towering figure of Chairman Mao. Confronted by the obvious unrest of the Khazaks of Kuldja, Mr. Ting had finally lost control. I seized the occasion to announce that I considered myself insulted and would no longer speak to him, unless he made a proper apology. And so my long non-dialogue with this man who could ask a hundred questions while answering none in any substance finally came to an end.

OUR one open-air visit in the Urumchi area, to a Khazak horse-raising commune, was farcical in the crudity of the simulation. After driving for many miles across the steppe, after pasing several genuine nomad camps, we stopped near a meadow in which there stood three multicolored tents. That, we were told, was the commune. Inside pretty Khazak girls served us with mare's milk, hard cheese, excellent Khazak bread, and whole boiled sheep while we were given a briefing on the commune, of which no evidence was in sight, neither tents nor houses nor barns. As usual the briefing featured a mass of figures about the commune's *mous* of land and high income; and as usual we went through the bit about Lin Piao and Confucianism (struggle against) and of course about Teng Hsiao-p'ing and the right-deviationist attempt to reverse the correct verdicts. Someone lifted one edge of the carpet in the polychrome tent (all the many tents we had passed on the road were dirty brown) and found the grass quite green. The show had been rigged for us.

That night I read in our travel file the account by Audrey Topping in the New York *Times*, who had visited the Khazak "East Wind Commune" near Urumchi. We too had visited what was described as the "East Wind Commune," near Urumchi, except that the figures they gave us for the men, women, and cattle were quite different, and of course the Topping article was written as if the whole thing were real, pretty tents and all. Unlike us, the distinguished journalist of the *Times* had obviously not thought it strange that a visit to a commune should not include even a glimpse of housing, animals, or peasants. But then the same distinguished journalist had taken on faith much more, principally about the status of women—a subject which has obviously become a bit of a joke among the Chinese barbarian-escort crowd. (During our lunch in the tents the Khazak serving girls ate too: our hosts would throw scraps of lamb over their shoulders, and the girls would catch them with practiced grace.) Everywhere we went in China women were part of the reception committees and revolutionary councils of town, province, commune, and factory. Hardly ever did we hear one say a word; they smiled and nodded but did not speak. When asked whether all announcers on Chinese radio were women, one of our senior escorts said that most were, but "important announcements are made by men, of course."

We were keen to visit the old Uighur town in the center of Urumchi and insisted long and hard. Finally our hosts agreed to let us "shop." We did not do our shopping in the ancient silk-route market reportedly still frequented by Mongols and Turks, nomads and farmers. Instead, at 9 P.M., after our dinner, we were driven to the standard provincial-capital department store. It had been kept open two hours past the normal closing, and all the members of the staff, three hundred at least, were standing at the ready behind the counters. Embarrassed at keeping so many from their families after a full ten-hour day, to serve nine casual shoppers, we quickly went through the three floors (stocked with the same goods we had seen in Peking and were to see in Shanghai), and found the local-products counter where we bought some embroidered hats and a decorated knife or two. On the way back I told my back-up escort that we were sad so many had been so greatly inconvenienced. He insisted that they were happy to be of service. I asked whether overtime would be paid. He said that China is free of such capitalistic practices.

ACTUALLY, for all the disappointment of our Sinkiang visit, by then we had already seen a great deal of the real China, much more than is normally accessible. In Peking and Shanghai the visitor is housed in the center of town, and there is none of the physical insulation so visible in Urumchi. Instead it is a very crowded program which normally keeps the visitor from seeing those cities for himself, as they really are: the usual China tour provides for a ceaseless sequence of action visits from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. In theory this still leaves the late evening hours open for individual exploration, but even in Peking this free time is of no consequence, since at night there is absolutely nothing to see or do. There are no open tea houses or shops to be found, and no restaurants or bars; there is not even street lighting, except for a few major boulevards. Soon after 8 P.M. the streets are deserted.

In our case, however, things were different: when Mao died our hosts were forced to cancel all tour programs and all our meetings with government leaders. We were therefore left free to ex-

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plore Peking at our leisure, for three whole days.

Immediately we discovered that the broad boulevards through which we had driven back and forth and the shopping street near our hotel were utterly different from the rest of the city. Instead of asphalt and concrete, the real Peking was made of beaten earth, mud, and sun-dried brick, its people living and working in narrow unpaved alleys lined with low buildings grouped around small courtyards. Inside were homes and workshops. Instead of the neat factories of the tour circuit, we saw how much of urban China really works, in miserably ill-equipped shanties. In one, dozens of women crowded the narrow doorway as they sorted out the single twigs of medicinal herbs by hand; another was a classic sweatshop out of New York in the 1890's, with a roomful of women working elbow to elbow on sewing machines of ancient design; in still another we saw men making wooden cotton looms with small hand tools—no electricity seemed to be connected at all.

Once we walked a mile or more down an alley filled with such shops before we came to a modern one. It was a printing shop, small like the rest but equipped with ultra-modern automatic machines imported from Japan: it was producing black-fringed funeral portraits of Chairman Mao. Until then it had not occurred to me that the millions of red flags, the posters, and the continually repainted wall slogans could themselves be a significant charge on the Chinese economy.

In the alleys and the courtyards one could also see how the Chinese lived: in small rooms, each the dwelling of an entire family and mostly taken up with a pair of broad platform beds. The weather was warm, doors and windows were open; in the early evening I passed a typical room, illuminated by a naked 30-watt bulb dangling from the ceiling. About six people were preparing to go to bed; there were two beds in the room and not much space in between. The only other furniture was a decorated trunk-box, and a large 1930's-style radio. This was the housing of old Peking subdivided for an expanded population.

The new housing one saw, newly built apartment blocks, seemed to be no less crowded. There too the usual 30-watt bulb would reveal several people in each room: the standard three-room apartment accommodates three separate families. In Shanghai we were later to be escorted around a typical apartment: a young couple with a baby, a pair of older people in retirement, and two unmarried men shared the kitchen and bathroom, but each pair had a fair-sized room of its own; the furniture was new, and there was a table, a chair, and a dresser. We were assured that this was a typical apartment—and it probably was, for the very few lucky enough to be given modern housing.

With its unpaved streets, its crowded alleys, and its one-story buildings, much of Peking is in fact village rather than city, and most of its population lives a miserably poor village life. If the Chinese maintain a prison-camp system for their politicals as the Russians do, they hardly need it: to be removed from one's post, to lose one's apartment and be forced to live among the ordinary folk, should be punishment enough for any deviationist in the party. We were, of course, never invited home by any of the officials we dealt with. But from the apartment of a diplomat friend one could look directly into an apartment house reserved for middle-ranking cadres: they too lived in standard three-room apartments, but each housed only a single family, and instead of the naked 30-watt bulb of ordinary folk, these apartments were well-lit. More senior cadres have their own small houses with a bit of garden around, but nobody has ever seen how the top echelon lives, for their housing is hidden behind the high walls of the elite residential compounds.

Perhaps the most transparent of all the simulations of social equality one sees in China is the mock-equality of dress. Almost everybody wears the standard boiler-suit, the Mao uniform. But some are made of rough cotton and others of delicate gabardine, and still others of good-quality wool. Senior party men would wear their equality in carefully tailored worsted wool, and their Mao suits had much more in common with Pierre Cardin than with the blue cotton outfits of ordinary people. And yet in the post-1972 reports of China it is the theme of visible equality that is most insistently advanced.

It is an intellectual mystery which deserves careful research. After the great warning of the Russian Potemkin tours of the 1930's, how could our intellectuals and our journalists—often explicitly mindful of the precedent—fall into the very same trap? What is the powerful urge to believe against all reason? I asked myself the question after just having read John Kenneth Galbraith's scholarly explanation of why there are no queues in China and then looking at the very long lines of hopeful Peking shoppers waiting to buy vegetables. I asked myself the question remembering James Reston's enthusiastic articles while I was being given a medical exam in the same hospital where he was operated upon—an exam in which ill-calibrated instruments yielded fantastic, impossible readings. I asked myself the question in beautiful Kweilin, visited by congressional ladies and sundry Senators, none of whom appears to have seen the grinding poverty evident in the thousands of women and old men harnessed like animals to carts loaded down with concrete blocks or heavy tanks of night soil.

Why have Galbraith *et. al* failed to convey to us the most fundamental of Chinese realities? After all, the miserable poverty of the country is everywhere in evidence, and the People's Republic of China is the only regime in the temperate zones of the world which actually makes a boast of its ability to feed and clothe its population. Perhaps

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Mr. Galbraith was simply comparing China with his familiar India, ignoring the fact that no tropical-zone country of any size is rich, while no temperate-zone country is anywhere near as poor as China. But could he really have ignored the great differences in the fertility of the land and the output of workers in different climatic zones? Could he be that ignorant? Or is it perhaps that visitors discount all because of the tragic vicissitudes of Chinese history up to 1949, as if only China had experienced great travails in this century? Or perhaps it is the great population, and the population density? But the Japanese have no more usable land per capita than China, and their food problem is to dispose of huge rice surpluses (in Tokyo my English-language newspaper carried an article about bright new ideas for dealing with the rice surplus, from free school meals to outright gifts abroad).

Why, moreover, have previous visitors not been revolted by the schoolrooms where small children are taught from booklets replete with the brutal images of harsh class-war propaganda? Why have our "Concerned Asia Scholars" failed to denounce the militarism of a system where the cheapest suit of clothing for little boys is a mini-uniform complete with toy rifle?

And, above all, how could they have missed the central phenomenon of Chinese life: its unique, almost pure totalitarianism? After all, it is scarcely concealed. The managers of a paint and canvas shop did not hesitate in the least to explain through an interpreter that they would not sell to anyone who would paint "reactionary pictures." Would trees and birds be thought reactionary? "Oh yes," they answered, "reactionary and personalistic." Would red flags and revolutionary workers be acceptable? "Not really. The capitalist-roaders are skilled in using the red flag against the red flag." Sound painting, it was explained to me, was painting that served the people by furthering the campaign against "the right-deviationist attempt of Teng Hsiao-p'ing to reverse the correct verdicts"—or, in other words, sound painting would serve the *current* campaign of the party. But how could you know what people would paint with the oils they bought here? Simple. The responsible member for the street, alley, or block would make sure that the people's paint and canvas would be used for the cause of the people. And if not? Then we would be told not to sell them any more paint, and they would in any case be forbidden to buy.

In a country where the crowding is extreme, where only the higher party officials have rooms of their own, the transparency of personal life to the party apparatus in every house and street is total and inescapable. If the regime has a Gestapo or KGB, it is unnecessary. In our walks through Peking, in which we were followed only at a distance, we brought our own American interpreter along, but we did not manage to have even one street conversation, however casual. It became evident that in the capital even old ladies and young boys knew that it was forbidden to speak with any foreigner. (In Kweilin the linguist in our group went for long pre-breakfast walks trying to find locals who would talk with him. He did once receive a reply. Gesturing toward the famous landscape of eroded karst, he said, "How beautiful," and to his great satisfaction a local answered, "Not necessarily." That was the only unofficial conversation this perfect speaker of Chinese had in China.)

With all the petty martinets and sundry authoritarian characters no doubt enrolled in the capillary control apparatus of the party, a degree of control can be maintained which the Soviet Union probably achieved only briefly in 1937-39 and again in 1950-53, and which Nazi Germany never achieved at all, except perhaps in the winter of 1944 and even then very imperfectly. In essence it is a new departure in the totalitarian experience, a system of *positive* instead of negative control. In the Soviet Union one can do anything, except for the very long list of forbidden things. In China there is no forbidden list at all. Instead, all activity is forbidden except for that which is specifically permitted and promoted by the party, certain bodily functions aside. (Reproduction definitely is within the province of party authority, the current policy being strongly against.)

The difference between totalitarian control in the Chinese pattern and Soviet-style negative control is not merely static: the Chinese system offers much less freedom, indeed virtually no freedom at all. But the major difference is that the very potential for freedom is absent. In the Soviet Union we have seen the lesser freedoms which survived even in Stalin's day grow into real limitations on the oppression of the regime. In the case of China there are no such seeds of future liberty, however constrained. "Radicals" and "pragmatists" both insist on continuing the system of positive control.

One would have thought that the total harnessing of popular energies the system seems to offer would at least result in a high degree of economic effectiveness. Indeed, the attraction of the Chinese model to those who have lost faith in the prospects of the private-enterprise model of development derives precisely from its supposed ability to create capital out of human energy which would otherwise go to waste. The image is that of peasants in their thousands building dams and dikes with labor that would otherwise be socially unproductive. And of course the Chinese model also supposedly harnesses all the resources that would be wasted on luxuries by the commercial middle classes that are the driving force of private-enterprise development.

The arguments have a certain plausibility and many find the imagery compelling. But the statistics tell a different story, and even casual travel

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observation provides ample confirmation of the statistics. It is true that the Chinese economy does not waste resources on the automobiles and television sets with which millions of dynamic entrepreneurs of Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, or South Korea are rewarded; and it is also true that the Chinese system can use mass labor which in India might find no use at all. But the Chinese system has its own built-in forms of waste.

In farm communes, or even in the smaller factories, the Chinese tradition of perfectionism and hard work result in high efficiency. The landscape of China is as finely carved as jade, with every inch of usable land being fully cultivated. But as soon as the resources are extracted from commune or local industry for investment under the provincial authorities, gross inefficiency and massive waste are commonplace.

In South China we visited a power-station in which hydropower from a small dam was working in combination with oil-fueled thermal units. We immediately noticed that only a couple of some eight generators were turning, in the middle of what appeared to be a normal working day. This could, of course, have been a low-demand hour in a low-demand season. It was not. We were assured that it was the normal level of output. Inadvertently, the whole sorry tale came out in the usual briefing. It seems that the dam had been built during the Great Leap Forward, in response to the slogans manufactured in Peking. It was then discovered that the water flow would not allow for electricity generation for several months of the year. During the Cultural Revolution the thermal units had been added. This meant that electricity could be produced all year 'round. But since much of the year either the hydro *or* the thermal units were working, the output from the whole complex required twice the capital equipment that would have been needed if only the thermal units had been installed. The water being high when we happened to be there, only the hydro units were turning, and the thermal units were idle. This, it was explained to us, meant that oil fuel was being saved.

Thus, in a country where capital is *the* critical limiting constraint on economic growth, the provincial authorities had priced the capital they used at zero, while taking full account of the cost of oil. Though the communes in the area could not afford the capital cost of trucks (as shown by the thousands of men and women we saw harnessed like beasts of burden to carts), the provincial authorities had wasted the capital they extracted from the communes with reckless abandon.

A more subtle manifestation of the pervasive irrationality of the Chinese system was in evidence at the very modern and very impressive machine-tool factory we visited in Shanghai. The factory did not merely make machine tools but precision machine-tools gear grinders and such like. Walking around the plant it became apparent that much of its equipment consisted of machines made in the plant itself. One does, of course, need high precision to make precision machine tools, but it was puzzling to note that sometimes very elaborate precision machines were being used even for rough work. It turned out that the factory in question could retain its own output at no cost for its own use, while it was a difficult business to obtain a machine tool made in another plant. Hence a machine worth, say, $100,000 was being used in place of a machine worth, say, $20,000, because the factory could not sell its own machines to buy cheaper and simpler ones elsewhere, and also keep the difference in cost for some worthwhile purpose of its own. The corrosive effect of a system without incentives evidently applies not only to personal productivity but also to industrial efficiency.

The total cost of such irrationality in the few hundred factories and power plants that make up the island of modern industry in the sea of China's primitive economy is obviously very great. And this waste of capital is obviously the root cause of the slow growth of the Chinese economy, where the heavy sacrifices of the masses are in large part squandered by the gross mismanagement of the provincial and central planners. To be sure, Chinese industrial growth has been of the order of 7 per cent a year since the chaotic disruptions of the Cultural Revolution came to an end. And this does compare very well with Western rates of growth. But on the very small base-level of Chinese industry it does not amount to much. More significant, it is a much *lower* rate of growth than in Hong Kong, Singapore, or Taiwan. If present trends continue, China will become the backward country cousin of these other Chinese economies. As of now the Chinese economy is downright medieval compared to that of South Korea, let alone Japan.

THE Chinese consumer pays for economic irrationality by being miserably poor, but China also pays by being militarily weak. Over the last ten years, while the Soviet Union has been modernizing its forces on land, at sea, and in the air at a rapid rate, the Chinese have fallen behind. By the early 1960's T-59 battle tanks were being produced in China, and they still are, with neither the output having increased nor the quality improved in fifteen years. Much of the equipment of the Chinese army is now totally obsolete, especially in the critical area of anti-armor weapons. The Chinese acquired 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles in the 1950's—when they were passable weapons against the tanks of those days—and they still rely on them today, even though these weapons would now be of little use against modern armored forces. In the air, the Chinese would have to fight against up-to-date Soviet aircraft with Chinese-made copies of Soviet fighters of the 1950's. At sea, the Chinese navy would face a

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similar generation gap and could not operate in the high seas at all. And in the presence of modern weapons, sheer numbers of troops can no longer make up for an extreme qualitative inferiority.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Russians have of late stopped adding forces on their long border with China. Having grown from very little to 42 divisions by 1972, the Russian ground deployment against China has not increased further over the last four years. On paper these 42 divisions amount to one-fourth of the Soviet army. In reality, the Chinese are absorbing a smaller share of the burden of containing Soviet military power since many of these 42 divisions are only partly mobilized, and some have only one-third of their nominal establishment.

Even the most casual exposure to China is sufficient to disprove the notion that one is dealing with an emergent superpower. China is of course a nuclear power in a small way (with much less real capability than Britain or even France), but otherwise it has none of the attributes of a superpower: far from being able to project its military power on the global scene, it could not even defend its own borders. Nor is there anything to suggest that China will become a superpower in ten, twenty, or even thirty years. Hence the right-wing Sinophilia of those who abhor the Chinese system but who see virtue in Chinese power as a counterweight to the Russian, is as flawed as the left-wing Sinophilia of those who see virtue in a society which combines a maximum of unfreedom with a minimum of efficiency.

How could all this too pass unobserved, when all the signs are in evidence? Is it perhaps that our scholars and our journalists can only recognize repression when it is crude and unsuccessful and therefore requires the visible presence of armed men in the streets? Is it that they can only recognize inefficiency and weakness in liberal democracies? How could the procession of China scholars who have written tour books fail to highlight for us the fact that they were denied any contact whatsoever with any Chinese not specifically instructed to speak to them? Was it because their overriding professional need is to be reinvited?

Perhaps so. After all, that is how the Chinese press department controls the journalists who have fed us much of what we think we know about China. Resident Peking correspondents do not file stories offensive to the Chinese because they are all specialized China experts whose jobs depend on their visas. Visiting correspondents are often equally dependent on periodic access. And so it is only the rare newspaperman who makes his own prior decision that he will seek no second visa who can be counted upon to serve us, and not the Chinese. The matter has long since acquired the full dimensions of a scandal. In the press that investigated Watergate is there no one ready to investigate?

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# A Mirror for Presidents

*Forrest McDonald*

OFTEN as Jimmy Carter quoted Harry Truman in the recent campaign, he never mentioned Truman's favorite maxim: "There is nothing new except the history you don't know." As a Born-Again Baptist, the President-elect may believe that the Bible contains all the history he needs to know, and perhaps he is right. With all due respect, however, I suggest that he and we might both benefit if he took a little time to bone up on American history, and especially the history of the Presidency. For openers, I offer the following observations, derived from study of our first and third Presidents.

The Presidencies of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, to be sure, were as different as those of John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. The two men represented fiercely hostile parties, their ideologies were polar opposites, their administrative methods were studies in contrast, their styles were strikingly antithetical. Apart from being Virginians, they seemingly had nothing in common but their red hair, and even on that score they differed, for Washington never appeared in public without a powdered wig and Jefferson scrupulously disdained that affectation.

If, however, their periods of incumbency are viewed in institutional perspective—if one considers their Presidencies not as administrations but as experiences in the office—one is struck by similarities rather than differences. Moreover, certain inherent and enduringly relevant characteristics of the Presidency itself become manifest.

One such characteristic is that the Presidency is dual in nature, entailing two functions so different from one another that the ability to perform them both is rarely to be found in a single person. One function is administrative and executive, and is involved in the formulation and implementation of policy. The other is ritualistic and ceremonial, and though we think of that part of the Presidency as being of secondary importance when we bother to think about it at all, it is at least as important as the governing function—and possibly a good deal more so. Indeed, scholars have often misunderstood the Presidency because they ignored or underestimated the purely ceremonial aspect of the office; and no small number of gifted men have failed as President because they did likewise, or were adept at one of the functions but not the other.

To justify and explain that observation, it is necessary to begin with colonial and even pre-colonial times. We derived our perception of the executive branch of government from the English, who unfortunately were not at all gifted in dealing with executive authority. For some centuries before the accession of the Tudors in 1485, the English tried to get along with home-grown kings, and they underwent a continuing succession of rebellions, civil wars, regicides, and usurpations. The Tudors, who were Welsh, not English, provided stability in the Crown until 1603, though with a great deal of attendant social, religious, and economic upheaval. Then came the Stuarts and along with them another century of rebellion, regicide, civil war, and revolution. At last, in 1714, the English found a king they could live with—George I of the small German principality of Hanover, who understood neither the English government nor the English language, and spent his entire reign unhappily wishing he could return to his beloved fatherland. The Hanoverians have occupied the British throne ever since, down to and including Elizabeth II.

IT WAS under the first two Hanoverians (George I and George II, 1714-60) that the English worked out a permanently viable monarchy—and, significantly, it was then that Anglo-Americans came to political maturity. The English solution to their problem was at once ingenious and ingenuous: they simply divided the two sets of royal functions and entrusted them to two separate sets of persons. Those functions that had to do with the exercise of power—defending the nation against alien enemies, enforcing domestic order and justice, and formulating and implementing governmental policy—became the province of the ministry, which was composed of

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members of Parliament and headed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The ritualistic and ceremonial functions remained the province of the Crown. Removed from the actual work of government, the English Crown became the symbol of the nation—its mystical embodiment—and as such the object of reverence, awe, veneration, even love. In English America, things were somewhat different: whereas the ministry in the mother country was recognized and obeyed as the government, tension continued to exist in the colonies between executive authority, as embodied in the royal governors and their councils, and the colonial assemblies, representing the colonial subjects. But the Americans professed as much reverence for the Crown in the person of the King as did their brethren in the home country, and except in parts of New England those professions reflected deeply felt sentiments. On both sides of the water, a people formerly given to killing their kings had now become willing to fight and die for them.

Then came an aberration, the third George, who attempted to reunite the two royal functions —with, for a time, a considerable measure of success. The Anglo-Americans reacted strongly against that effort, and the story of the American Presidency, as well as the independence of the United States, begins with their reaction. The Americans' sense of betrayal is reflected in the Declaration of Independence: apart from a bit of stirring propaganda at the beginning and end, that document is little more than a recitation in dreary detail of George III's alleged abuses of executive authority. The same sentiment was expressed more tangibly in the revolutionary constitutions: the governors of the several states were mere figureheads, and the Confederation Congress had no excutive arm at all.

Yet the Americans did not abandon their habit of ceremonial reverence toward the Crown, despite the Founding Fathers' fervent protestations in favor of republicanism. To have done so would have been to cast off generations of social conditioning overnight, if indeed not to deny a basic human need. Instead, the Americans kept the monarchical habit alive through various surrogates. Thus, for instance, they vested the state governors with responsibility for performing many of the traditional royal rituals; in lieu of celebrating George's birthday they celebrated that of their "deliverer," Louis XVI of France; and when the French dauphin was born in the 1780's they celebrated the event with public balls, firing of cannon, displays of fireworks, and dancing in the streets.

Meanwhile, the political experience of the immediate postwar years convinced most thinking Americans that they had overreacted against executive power in 1776—and, indeed, that government without an executive branch is no government at all. The subject was still so touchy, however, that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 spent more time debating the proper construction of the executive branch than they did on the legislative and judicial branches combined. In the end, they merely sketched the duties and description of the office in broad outlines, and left it for the first incumbent to fill in the details.

THEY were willing to do so—and, in fact, were willing to create the Presidency at all—only because George Washington was available to serve as the first President. The virtual deification of Washington in his own time, not merely by the multitudes but by sophisticated and hard-nosed politicians and businessmen as well, is something of a wonder. Part of the explanation is that he was the nation's military hero, though some other American commanders were abler and had better records. He also looked like a leader: he was cool and aloof, and tall, broad-shouldered, and narrow-hipped; and in a country populated mainly by people who were hot-tempered and overly confidential, and short and fat, such attributes were not to be taken lightly. Moreover, he quite self-consciously played the part of the impeccably upright Father of his Country. And, finally, there was the unspoken (and unspeakable) but nevertheless very real popular craving for a king.

Therein lay Washington's greatest contribution to the Presidency and to the perdurance of republican institutions in America. He provided a halfway house between monarchy and republicanism; he made it possible (and safe) for Americans to indulge their traditional reverence for the Crown without reneging on their commitment to a republican form of government. The way he played his role was a product of studied design, and he devoted far more time and thought to matters of ceremony than to matters of state. From all advisers that he trusted he solicited suggestions for rules of conduct that would strike a balance between "too free an intercourse and too much familiarity" (which would reduce the dignity of the office) and "an ostentatious show" of monarchical aloofness (which would be improper in a republic). Rules were worked out, and so effectively did Washington follow them that no less skeptical a person than Abigail Adams, wife of the Vice President and a veteran of receptions at Versailles and the Court of St. James, was almost moonstruck upon meeting the President. Washington, she gushed, moved and handled himself "with a grace, dignity, and ease that leaves Royal George far behind him."

As to carrying out the executive functions of government, Washington looked to the Constitution as a guide and took the document quite literally, almost as if it were a manual of instructions.

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For several years, for instance, he did not meet with his department heads in cabinet sessions; rather, as the Constitution directed, he "required their opinions in writing," even on the most trivial of matters, which added greatly to their work loads. As to the formulation of legislative policy, Washington scrupulously avoided having any part of it, for that, he believed, would have involved an improper violation of the doctrine of the separation of powers: he would no more have proposed a law, for example, than he would have vetoed a bill on grounds of policy. Even in regard to foreign affairs he tried for a time to follow the Constitution literally; once, he sauntered into a session of the Senate to seek its "advice and consent" regarding some Indian treaties, and occasioned a great deal of confused embarrassment in the doing.

Such methods of procedure left a considerable void in the actual wielding of executive power, and under those circumstances the United States moved rapidly, albeit temporarily, toward a version of the ministerial system then used in England. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton—acting, it will be recalled, neither on his own initiative nor on orders from the President, but upon instructions from Congress—submitted his two great reports on the public debt, then his report on the Bank, and then his report on manufactures, and accompanied them all with lengthy drafts of proposed legislation. Moreover, he worked intimately with congressmen in steering his proposals into law; and, with congressional cooperation, he continued to formulate and see to the enactment of legislation throughout his tenure as Secretary. Clearly he conceived of his "ministry" as the "government," and thought of himself as the prime minister. Even after he retired, Hamilton continued for some time more or less to direct the government, more or less through a ministry.

THE Jeffersonian Republicans objected to the Federalists' approach to government on quite a number of grounds, central among them being the Federalists' conception of the executive. Jefferson and his followers not only believed Hamilton to be a monarchist but even regarded him as the agent of an international monocratic conspiracy. They castigated Washington for indulging in royal pageantry and for wallowing, kinglike, in popular adulation; they denounced Hamilton for introducing, extra-constitutionally, the corrupt British ministerial system. And yet the Republicans' own conception of a proper executive branch was curiously mixed. On the one hand, they insisted that executive power was and should be strictly limited by the written Constitution, and that it should be absolutely separate from the legislative branch. On the other hand, in their hearts they did not trust paper Constitutions, and they looked to Jefferson to be an elected version of what the English Tory, Viscount Bolingbroke, had called a patriot king: one who would rally the entire nation to his banner, and then, in an act of supreme wisdom and virtue, voluntarily restrain himself and thus restore the ancient system of the separation of powers.

When the Jeffersonians came to power in 1801, they promptly refashioned the executive in accordance with their ideological precepts. As to the ceremonial—or what we might properly call the monarchical—functions of the office, Jefferson seemingly rejected them entirely. What he actually did, however, was to republicanize them. He ostentatiously forswore ostentation and display, pomp and protocol. He gave no public balls and held no levees, and no one celebrated his birthday. He abandoned the monarchical ritual (which had been followed by Washington and Adams and all state governors) of appearing in person before the legislative branches, and afterward exchanging formal messages about the executive message; instead, when Jefferson had anything to say to Congress he sent a written note, and kept it as brief as possible. He staged no entertainments for the public; instead, his doors were open to every citizen at all times. Finally, he never held "court" for government officials or foreign ministers. Instead, he held a continuous succession of small, informal dinner parties, at which the wines were superb and the cuisine was prepared by a French chef, but the atmosphere was one of studied casualness. Unwigged, dressed in frayed homespun and run-down slippers, Jefferson captivated his guests with the folksy, open hospitality of a country squire and with dazzling conversation that ranged from art, architecture, and archeology through mathematics and music to philosophy and zoology.

This was not merely a republican affectation adopted as a counterfoil to monarchical affectation, nor was it a form of reverse snobbery. Rather, it reflected a calculated design on Jefferson's part, and accomplished just what he expected it to accomplish. By stripping everyone of the possibility of pretense and the trappings of status, and by dealing with people only in intimate gatherings where he was host and master of the house, he established a setting in which he was utterly without peers. In those circumstances he stood towering as the first among equals.

By that means—and through the instrumentality of a well-organized Republican press, which had only to describe him as he truly was—Jefferson became immensely popular. He became, in fact, quite as popular as Washington had been at the time of his inauguration, before partisan attacks began to tarnish his previously spotless reputation. There was, however, a crucial difference between Jefferson's popularity and that of Washington. Whereas Washington had been revered as a demigod and the symbol of the nation, Jefferson made the transition from monarchy to republican-

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ism complete by humanizing the Presidency and serving as a symbol not of the nation but of the people. That was an achievement of profound significance, for as the American people became democratized and spread their society over a vast continent, they sorely needed a symbolic monarch if they were to remain a single nation, and yet they could tolerate one only if he bore the peculiarly democratic stamp that Jefferson had coined.

As to the executive function, the "Revolution of 1800," as Jefferson called it, took place on several levels and in several stages. Administratively, the government was purged of "irreconcilable monarchists" (that is, staunch Hamiltonians) and in choosing their replacements Jefferson employed an artful blend of patronage and meritocracy. The actual conduct of administration was put mainly in the charge of Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin, who had the twin tasks of dismantling Hamilton's elaborate fiscal machinery and of instituting methodical procedures and strict accounting in place of the slipshod and cavalier ways that had been followed by the Federalists. Gallatin also served as the middleman between the President and Congress. That made it possible for Jefferson to influence legislation without interfering directly in the legislative process, and thus to preserve the form of strict separation of powers; and it gave Jefferson all the flexibility of Hamilton's independent ministerial system while leaving the President in command.

Jefferson presided over the administration with the easy, relaxed, informal manner that he employed at his congressional dinner parties, and with equal success. He conducted cabinet meetings as a democracy of equals, and allowed Congress to operate with no overt presidential direction and only the gentlest of presidential guidance; and yet, until almost the very end, he ran Congress more successfully and more completely than Hamilton had ever done and few succeeding Presidents ever would do, and the cabinet always reflected his will except when he had no firm opinions on a matter. Moreover, he did so without using any of the techniques that are usually associated with "strong" Presidents—popular pressure, naked power, bribery, flattery, cajolery, blackmail, or shrewd trading. Rather, his achievements all flowed from the force of his intellect, his character, and his personality.

But that, perversely, was a grave weakness in the Republican scheme of things: administratively, the system could be made to work only with a Thomas Jefferson at the helm, and so far we have never had another. When Jefferson himself faltered, as he did on several occasions during his Presidency, government almost stopped functioning except in the routine operations of Gallatin's Treasury machinery. When Jefferson left office, the shortcomings of his method of administration rapidly became manifest. The cabinet became the center of petty bickering and continuous cabalizing, and Congress split into irreconcilable factions and repeatedly asserted its will against that of the President.

In other words, the Jeffersonians destroyed the English-*cum*-Washingtonian/Hamiltonian split system of the Presidency, and erected no viable alternative in its place. The resulting problem has plagued us throughout the nation's history. The most popular Presidents in their own time—those who most successfully fulfilled the monarchical function of the office—were men like Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, who obviously put on a swell show but never accomplished much of anything, or like Andrew Jackson, who won popular adulation while wreaking irreparable destruction. Others were extremely able at getting things done—I make no comment here about the merits of what they were doing, and have in mind such Presidents as Taft, Hoover, Johnson, and Nixon—but were so totally incompetent in fulfilling the monarchical function of the Presidency that they were virtually ridden out of the office on a rail. The big winners in the history books are those who—like Lincoln, Wilson, and Harry Truman—were shrewd, devious, unscrupulous, and successful operators, unloved and unlovable in their own times, but whom the historians can enshrine as retroactively lovable after all memory of their personalities has disappeared.

So much for the first characteristic of the Presidency. A second characteristic has to do with the exercise, structure, and psychic cost of presidential power, and is a bit more involved. Although in this case too I shall confine my discussion primarily to the Presidencies of Washington and Jefferson, I mean my observations to pertain in general to administrations that extend for two terms. As it happens, both Washington and Jefferson could have been reelected for a third term had they so chosen, but it took a great deal of persuasion to get Washington to serve even a second term, and Jefferson announced shortly after his reelection that he would follow Washington's precedent and retire at the end of his second. By Madison's time the two-term limit had already hardened into a hoary tradition.

Given that tradition, the relations between a President and his party and Congress change profoundly between his first and second terms. Politically they are interdependent during the first term, for each can help the other to reelection. After the President is reelected, they no longer have such a relationship: the President, not coming up for a third election, has no further political need for the congressmen of his party, and he is of no future political use to them. The resulting mutual estrangement is exacerbated by a peculiarity

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of American political history. That is, though the President is cut off from his power base in government by reason of his lame-duck status, he almost invariably has the illusion of increased power because he almost invariably wins bigger when running for reelection than he did when being elected the first time.

This shifting of political relationships has major implications, one of which is that the President's followers, no matter how loyal and honorable they may have been during the first term, tend to start jockeying for positions in the race to become his successor four years hence—even though such activity may be clearly inimical to the national interest. Throughout Washington's first term, for instance, Jefferson and Hamilton behaved with some civility toward one another in their roles as Secretaries of State and the Treasury; but during the second term they were the leading rivals to succeed him, and all restraint was abandoned. Hamilton spent more time attacking (or, actually, counter-attacking) Jefferson than he did attending to his duties, and eventually he more or less forced Jefferson to resign. Meanwhile, Jefferson entirely neglected his duties in the State Department, attempted to sabotage the administration's foreign policy, vilified his rival incessantly, and finally destroyed Hamilton as a presidential prospect with a lurid exposé of his extramarital indiscretions.

A decade later, after Jefferson himself had been elected for a second term, he was a hapless witness to an even more destructive version of the game. His Secretary of the Navy, supported by factions in the House and the Senate, sought to undermine the administration's foreign policy so as to discredit Secretary of State James Madison as a prospective successor to the Presidency. They backed James Monroe, who was then minister to England; and Madison, for his part, deliberately hewed to a policy that created a serious danger of war with Britain rather than allow Monroe to negotiate a treaty that would insure peace but also greatly increase Monroe's pretensions to the Presidency. Toward the end of Jefferson's second term, the maneuvering for future advantage took on extreme proportions: for instance, William Branch Giles of Virginia, who for fifteen years had been an unwaveringly loyal Republican, began to sabotage Gallatin's Treasury administration when he learned that Gallatin (instead of himself) might be Madison's own choice for Secretary of State.

OTHER implications of the shifting of relationships in the second term more directly affect the President and the Presidency. One is that the President, no matter how humble his behavior before, tends to emerge from his triumphant reelection with a sense of power that borders on arrogance, if indeed he does not suffer delusions that he is God or superman. To a generation that has witnessed the Presidencies of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, such an observation will hardly elicit a raised eyebrow; but it may come as a surprise to learn that Washington and Jefferson, in their second terms, also tended to set themselves above the law and to regard opposition and even criticism as being tantamount to treason. The phenomenon is indigenous to the presidential office.

Washington, shortly after his reelection, was faced with mounting criticism from informal oppositionist political clubs called Democratic-Republican societies. He regarded the societies much as the late Senator Joseph McCarthy regarded "cells" of the American Communist party—namely, as agents of a foreign power and of an international revolutionary conspiracy—but was at first unable to do much to suppress them. Then a group of moonshiners in the mountains of Pennsylvania tarred and feathered a "revenooer," so to speak—actually they besieged and burned the house of a collector of the federal excise tax on whiskey—and Washington proclaimed the action to be the handiwork of Jacobin subversives, the Democratic-Republican societies. He assembled a force of 15,000 militiamen and personally marched at their head to crush the so-called insurrection. That episode was typical of his toleration for political opposition during his second administration.

But if Washington's second administration was intolerant, that of the Father of American Liberty, Thomas Jefferson, was a nightmare of repression. Among other things, Jefferson attempted to have the Supreme Court purged of Federalists through impeachment on purely political grounds; he sanctioned the suspension of *habeas corpus,* the wholesale arrest of citizens without charges, and the forcible removal of accused persons from the district in which they had a constitutional right to trial; he declared large regions in insurrection and under martial law for the legal violations of a handful of persons; he became the only President prior to modern times who bypassed the courts and used the army in the routine enforcement of the laws; he sought, received, and personally enforced legislation depriving whole classes of people of their property, not only without due process of law but without even the possibility of a trial; he denounced a critical press with an almost paranoid sense of persecution, and attempted by legal and extra-legal means to suppress newspapers which opposed him. Finally, he attempted during his last year in office to supervise, with minute and personal attention, not only what his fellow citizens should eat—this is quite literally true—but how much they should eat as well.

In the face of all this, his party became split into two ideological wings. One, concentrated in the House and led by John Randolph of Roanoke, veered to the extreme position of the doctrinaire

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libertarian who would abide the subversion of government and of society itself before willfully jeopardizing the rights and liberties of a single citizen. The other, concentrated in the Senate and led by William Branch Giles, adhered to a form of Republicanism that might be styled totalitarian libertarianism: believing that government in their hands was dedicated to preserving human liberty, they saw legal protection of the civil rights of accused persons only as subterfuges behind which traitors and other enemies of liberty could hide. Jefferson almost uniformly sided with this latter group. Among the fruits of their labors was a bill, passed in the Senate but rejected in the House, which would have prescribed the death penalty for any person who "resisted the general execution of any public law."

YET another implication to the Presidency of the reelection-and-lame-duck syndrome is related to the previous one. It is in the nature of the Presidency that matters of domestic reform, however engrossing they may be for the President initially, lose their appeal after a time. The chore of manipulating or currying favor with congressmen, necessary though it is, grows tedious and even demeaning, and the attraction of dealing with foreign affairs, wherein one has a much freer hand, becomes well-nigh irresistible. So it was with Washington by the winter of 1792-93, and so it was with Jefferson by the winter of 1804-05. Each man found the prospect of close future dealings with Congress entirely distasteful, to say the least; and neither would have been human if, in the afterglow of a triumphant reelection, a voice deep inside had not whispered that he had now earned the right to stand above that sort of thing.

In any event, though neither of them plunged totally into overseas adventuring upon being reinaugurated—as many of their successors were wont to do—both entirely neglected domestic reform for the sake of foreign affairs in their second terms. Since I am not concerned here with the history of their administrations, but with generalizations about the Presidency that can be drawn from them, I shall not dwell on this subject. It is germane, however, to point out that Washington was much more successful in handling foreign relations than Jefferson was, and to suggest a reason.

Washington was governed exclusively by his conception of the national interest, while Jefferson's policy was tempered (if not dictated) by considerations of ideology. Historians have generally held that Jefferson's approach was the more progressive, enlightened, and humane, and that it was merely bad fortune that his policy brought failure, economic ruin, and ultimately war, whereas Washington's had brought peace and prosperity. I devoutly disagree with that judgment. To the extent that ideology and not interest governs a nation's policy, the nation sacrifices its ability to compromise, to admit it was wrong, and to change—for when the true believer, in politics or in religion, compromises or recants, he has committed the mortal sin of making accommodations with the infidel or the devil. The Jeffersonians, proving to be unable to make accommodations with those they regarded as wicked, locked themselves into a foreign-policy strait jacket, and the inexorable result was Jefferson's calamitous last year in office in which, to avoid war in Europe, the United States government virtually waged war against its own citizens.

STILL another aspect of the problem is that in his second term the President becomes fair prey for every manner of vilification: once the reality of his lame-duck status begins to penetrate the popular consciousness, press and politicians move in like so many hyenas gathering around a wounded lion. It has been so since the beginning. Washington, who had been utterly sacrosanct before, had scarcely been reelected when the personal attacks began. Early in 1793 Philip Freneau's *National Gazette* (an opposition newspaper secretly financed by Jefferson out of State Department funds) opened the barrage by describing the celebration of Washington's birthday as a "monarchical farce," and by sneering that his sycophants fawned upon him as if he were "Virtue's self." The attacks mounted in shrillness and intensity in the ensuing months, and by year's end a New York Republican journal was emboldened to charge that Washington's education had consisted mainly of "gambling, reveling, horse racing, and horse whipping"; that he was "infamously niggardly" in private dealings; and that, despite his pretended religious piety, he was a "most horrid swearer and blasphemer." Before long, if John Adams's recollections are to be believed, "ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, threatened to drag Washington out of his house, and effect a revolution in the government." For the next two years, as the attacks continued and increased (he was accused of stealing from the Treasury and even of having secretly been a traitor during the Revolution), Washington repeatedly interrupted cabinet meetings to indulge himself in tirades against the press or in fits of self-pity. When he finally left office, Benjamin Bache—grandson of Franklin and editor of the Philadelphia *Aurora*—penned this stirring eulogy: "If ever there was a period for rejoicing, this is the moment. Every heart [that is] in unison with the freedom and happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation that the name of Washington from this day ceases to give a currency to political iniquity and to legalized corruption."

Jefferson's story was somewhat different, for he

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had been exposed to some pretty juicy scurrility through much of his public career. Already before he became President he had been widely castigated as an atheist, a coward, a bloodthirsty revolutionary, a hypocrite, a liar, a demagogue, and a fop; and during his first term his improper advances toward the wife of a close friend were revealed in the newspapers, and it was charged (or exposed, depending upon which historians you believe) that he had long had a slave as a concubine and had sired several children by her. Throughout all this, however, he maintained his aplomb, and at least publicly maintained his posture as the unqualified champion of freedom of the press.

It was in the second term that newspaper attacks finally and deeply began to wound him—or, to put it another way, that his critics became so vicious that they were at last able to find his vulnerable spots. Curiously, he proved to be relatively insensitive to attacks on his personal behavior or morality but hypersensitive to charges regarding his public conduct. Charges that he was an agent or lackey of Napoleon, or was excessively secretive, or dictated to Congress sent him into fits of rage or fits of depression. And his enemies, once they got the knife in, twisted it unmercifully. Jefferson's response was much as Washington's had been, except perhaps that it was more so. He had once written that a free press was more vital to public happiness than good government, and that faced with a mutually exclusive choice he would readily opt for the press; now he resurrected the oppressive ancient doctrine of common-law indictment for seditious libel, and attempted to whip the press into line by instituting what he called "a few wholesome prosecutions." When that failed to stop the onslaught, he could only fulminate and whimper and rage. "Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper," he wrote again and again. He remarked repeatedly that it was a "melancholy truth" that suppression of the press would be no worse than the press's own "abandoned prostitution to falsehood." He wailed that "our printers raven on the agonies of their victims, as wolves do on the blood of the lamb."

Along with attacks by the press, there is usually, toward the end, some sort of open rebellion by Congress. This does not always apply, but it is almost invariable with what political scientists used to call "strong" Presidents. Thus, during Andrew Jackson's last year in office and in Theodore Roosevelt's as well, Congress formally resolved that it would not even receive any further messages from the President. Normally the congressional rebellion emanates from the Senate, which is attempting to regain some of the influence in the conduct of foreign relations which it believes the President has usurped. The phenomenon can work with either or both houses, however, and the Presidencies of Washington and Jefferson offer illustrations of each of the possible combinations.

With Washington, the rebellion came in 1796, and arose in the House of Representatives. The keystone in Washington's foreign policy was Jay's treaty with Great Britain, signed in the winter of 1794-95 and approved by the Senate, after an intensive campaign and by the narrowest of constitutional margins, in a special session in the summer of 1795. When the full Congress reconvened in December, House Republicans (who vehemently opposed the treaty) sought to chastise the administration and cut the House in on foreign-policy decisions in future. Taking the position that the House's exclusive power to initiate appropriations (without which no treaty could be implemented) gave it a voice in foreign policy co-equal to the Senate's power to approve or reject treaties, the House demanded that the President turn over all papers relating to Jay's mission. Those papers contained some politically damaging documents, and (quite in addition to his objection to the constitutional challenge) Washington was loath to surrender them. He brooded over the demand; and then, summoning what was left of his great personal dignity, he sent his answer. The papers, he said, were not "relative to any purpose under the cognizance of the House of Representatives, except that of an impeachment; which the resolution had not expressed," and on that ground he refused. Despite everything, no congressman was willing to go that far, and the matter died.

Jefferson, for his part, did not fare as well. During the last congressional session of his Presidency, the Senate rose to reassert its claim to a role in foreign affairs, particularly in ways designed to prevent Jefferson's successor from having a free hand in continuing Jefferson's policies. Then both houses decided to scuttle the embargo, on which Jefferson had staked his all as an instrument of foreign policy, and they did so in a way that was at least partly a deliberate insult: they voted that the embargo should expire on March 4, so that Jefferson's Presidency and his favorite policy should die together. Finally, the Senate took a cheap shot that was a matter of calculated cruelty aimed at the fallen President. Some months earlier Jefferson had appointed an old friend, William Short, to a legally nonexistent post as minister to Russia, expecting that the Senate would routinely confirm the appointment and thus support a pet project that he had worked long and diligently for, the opening of diplomatic relations with Czar Alexander I. For political reasons, he held back an announcement of the appointment until the last minute; and when the Senators received it, they summarily and unanimously rejected it.

My final point should by now be obvious. It is simply that the burden of presidential power over a period of two terms

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—the psychic cost of the office—is greater than any reasonable man can be expected to bear.

The Presidency left Washington a broken and beaten man—embittered, given to almost insane rages, possessed of little memory or judgment, and convinced that a conspiracy had undermined his Presidency and was hounding him to his grave. Perhaps the most telling testimony as to what the office had cost him is the angry, defensive, and self-pitying draft of a final message that he composed early in 1796—that is, before Hamilton wrote for him the immortal document which was actually released as his Farewell Address. This is how Washington's own version read:

> As this address, fellow citizens, will be the last I shall ever make to you, and as some of the gazettes of the United States have teemed with all the invective that disappointment, ignorance of facts, and malicious falsehoods could invent, to misrepresent my politics and affections—to wound my reputation and feelings—and to weaken, if not entirely destroy, the confidence you have been pleased to repose in me; it might be expected at the parting scene of my public life that I should take some notice of such virulent abuse. But, as heretofore, I shall pass them over in utter silence.

The rest of the draft was an itemized denial of the charges.

And if Washington's Presidency ended in anguish, Jefferson's ended in agony. Jefferson had remarked that Washington suffered during his second term "more than any person I ever yet met with," but Jefferson's own suffering in the same circumstances was even greater. He came to regard each session of Congress as an unbearable ordeal; he repeatedly referred to the Presidency as his prison; during his last two years in office he was periodically afflicted with migraine headaches that kept him shut alone in a darkened room for weeks on end; in his final year he collapsed under what used to be called a nervous breakdown—a total paralysis of will. At last the ordeal was done, and on March 4, 1809, he was at Madison's side as Chief Justice John Marshall administered the oath of office to the President-elect. He remained in Washington a week, packing his belongings, before quitting the place forever. Then the sixty-five-year-old Father of American Liberty mounted a horse, to ride through snow and storm for three days and nights until he regained the sanctuary of his home at Monticello. In the seventeen years that remained of his life, he never again left the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

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# How "Partisan Review" Began

*William Phillips*

*Partisan Review* was born in the 30's in the decade that we look back on today with so much curiosity, nostalgia, misunderstanding. It seems so long ago, especially when one considers what has happened since: World War II, Vietnam, two Israeli-Arab wars, Watergate, China, women's liberation, a sexual and cultural revolution. But despite these enormous changes, many of the questions that haunt us today are updated versions of the questions I grew up with in the 30's. And if the time between the 30's and the 70's often appears foreshortened, it is because of the peculiar sense of contemporaneity that makes the whole modern period seem all of a piece.

Intellectually speaking, I, too, was born in the 30's. Perhaps it is too egocentric to identify one's formative years with the beginnings of this era. But I think it can be said that the 30's were the cradle of our entire epoch, and that we are all living out the unsolved problems—intellectual as well as political—first posed at that time. For what we think of as the contemporary mind had its origins in the profoundly traumatic shift of consciousness that took place in the 30's.

But of course, none of us thought about such world-shaking matters at the time. Moved by all kinds of immediate considerations, we simply thought a magazine was needed to represent a new approach to literature and politics. Nor did we know that the magazine we were starting was itself to influence writing and thinking for a long time and to set an intellectual pattern for literary publications.

The radical 30's quickly brought together people from different intellectual and social backgrounds, and just as quickly dispersed most of them into different beliefs and careers. I myself had come from the poor boy's land, from the Bronx and City College, then graduate work at NYU and Columbia. Despite the lack of money and worldliness, I had managed to avoid radicalization—or, indeed, politicization of any kind. On the contrary, my literary and intellectual development was rooted in the 20's, in the experience of modernism: my world was bounded on all sides by Eliot, Pound, Joyce, the Cubists, Mondrian, etc. It was only in the depth of the Depression—in the 30's—that I began to take any interest in social themes and movements. Ironically, however, I discovered the Left not through the world-shaking events of the time, though they obviously provided the setting, but in the material of a course I was teaching at New York University in the 30's. It was a lowly course in which we had to read some essays to learn something called expository writing. But the standard text was so bad, so pointless, so banal while pretending to be popular in the way only academic collections can be, that I decided to use the *Nation* and the *New Republic* as our texts. And in the process of reading and discussing these magazines religiously as they came out each week, both teacher and students became radicalized—though I should add immediately that by radicalized I mean becoming aware of a world outside literature and the arts, of politics, and the problems of society.

Shortly thereafter, I heard of the John Reed Club, a left-wing organization of writers and painters, associated more closely with the Communist party than I realized at the time, and I began to go to its meetings. I should say right off that like most political associations connected with the arts its literary and intellectual level was not the highest. Nevertheless, one gets sucked in—something that people who have never been involved in political movements cannot understand—by the spirit and ostensible goals of the organization, and by the *Zeitgeist*. What I mean is that one is sucked in, despite one's awareness of the stupidities of the organization or the cause, by some reformist zeal that places the end above the means and leads one to believe the means could be purified. Anyway, one thing led to another, and I soon became secretary of the John Reed Writers Club, at the same time that I was becoming more and more opposed to the crude literary positions and the corrupt politics of the Communists who dominated the John Reed Club and the literary Left generally. What does one do in such a situation? One dreams of a magazine to express one's views and to mobilize a group of disaffected writers looking for a similar direction. It was about this time that I met Philip Rahv, who had drifted into the John Reed Club from the West Coast. He was more politicized

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than I was, having come directly to the Left without going through a modernist phase, as I had. I had already published a piece of non-Marxist criticism in the *Symposium,* while he had started out writing in the *New Masses.* He was unsophisticated, but very intelligent and endowed with a shrewd political sense.

I had also written for the *New Masses* and other Left publications, but I was appalled by the sectarian orthodoxy that prevailed in circles connected with the Communists. Still, I was not entirely aware that the vulgarities of the politics as well as the approach to the arts were not an intellectual aberration but were grounded in the monolithic structure and thinking of the Communists. Rahv and I still had the illusion that a new literary publication could be the organ of those radical writers who had no use for the party-line aesthetics of the *New Masses,* and could be open to genuine talent, regardless of politics. We had no experience in putting out a magazine, no sense of what it involved, no notion of how to raise the necessary money. We were cocky kids, driven by a grandiose idea of launching a new literary movement, combining older with younger talents, and the best of the new radicalism with the innovative energy of modernism. But we could not envision anything beyond an organ of the John Reed Club, which at least provided a base for such a publication. The only trouble was that there was no money, not at the John Reed Club, or indeed anywhere else.

ONLY a miracle could produce a magazine, and it could be said that *Partisan Review* has been sustained all these years by miracles, though miracles are often man-made. Anyway, the first miracle arrived in the form of an urbane Englishman, John Strachey, just turned Left, who was coming to New York and agreed to give a talk—on literature and dialectical materialism—for the benefit of the John Reed Club. We hired a hall, sold tickets, publicized the event —all quite amateurishly, for professionalism had not yet invaded the realm of serious or radical culture. Nevertheless, the lecture turned out to be a smash hit: people were begging for tickets, and trying to crash the gate. It was a Sunday night, and Rahv and I and our wives left the hall with our pockets stuffed with money, scared of losing it or of being robbed until we could get to the bank the next morning.

We had raised the unbelievable sum of eight hundred dollars, enough to run a magazine for a year in a collapsed economy. We had no rent, no salaries, nobody to phone, and printing costs made the Depression seem like a literary utopia. There was no financial support from the John Reed Club, or from any other source, but we were able to supplement the original windfall by running lectures and dances. In fact, we were so enterprising that the John Reed Club became known for having the best dance floor in the city. And we finally made it when we were arrested for "charging admission at a party" and "selling drinks without a license." It was at a party one Saturday evening for the German composer, Hanns Eisler, who had been prominent in Communist activities and had just arrived in this country. The affair had been going full swing, when a man approached me as I was standing next to the table where the punch was being sold, and asked me the price of a drink. I told him it was twenty-five cents, and he asked whether I would pour one for him. I did and dropped the quarter he had ostentatiously given me in a box full of money on the table. He then asked me to step outside with him, informed me that he was a cop, and said that I had violated the ABC law. Apparently another cop had taken Rahv outside, too, and told him he was running an affair without a license. They took us to a nearby police station, where they said we could explain things to the captain and then go home. We then got our first lesson in police methods, for as soon as we got there they frisked us and put us in a cell for the night, while assuring us we would be released on bail in the morning. I was permitted to call my wife, but of course it was impossible to raise the bail money on Sunday. However, with remarkable resourcefulness she managed to find a friend who put up a Soviet government bond as bail.

I thought I would make the best of it by trying in the meantime to get some sleep. But even if I could have slept on one of the hard benches in the cell, I would have been kept up all night by Rahv's stalking back and forth as though he were in a cage, cursing one by one with all the petulant and fulsome rhetoric he could sputter out, all those members of the John Reed Club who were not in jail, and who were probably having a good time at the party.

At the trial several months later we were defended by an International Labor Defense lawyer, which meant his primary duty was to carry the class struggle into the courtroom. Only secondarily, and as a fringe benefit, as it were, was he concerned with what happened to Rahv and myself. And though we were finally found not guilty, the judge told us later he had almost sentenced us out of sheer desperation and annoyance at the noisy antics of our lawyer. In the end, apparently what saved us was that the ensnaring and careless tactics of the cops in arresting us ultimately outweighed the provocative and ideological ineptness of our defense. The trial itself was of course a farce. Since I could be made to look more respectable, I became the featured defendant. Much was made of the fact that I was a college instructor, and before long the judge began to address me as Professor Phillips. Also, our attorney kept piling copies of things that I had written on the judge's desk and pushing them under his nose, while the judge kept pushing them away, obviously irritated at this crude attempt to build up my "character" and

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professional status in a way that clearly had nothing to do with the charges.

*Partisan Review* began as a monthly, and as the organ of the John Reed Club. But it was understood from the beginning that Rahv and I were the main force behind the magazine, and its chief editors. Since the magazine was sponsored by the John Reed Club, however, it had to have the kind of editorial representation all organizations—especially political ones—demand. Hence the masthead of the first issue looked like a showcase of participatory democracy.

This phase of the magazine, its first phase, which should really be called the old *Partisan Review,* was shortlived. It lasted for two years, through nine issues. At the same time the editorial board kept shrinking, until at the end there were only three editors, Rahv, I, and Alan Calmer, a sensible, self-effacing member of the John Reed Club. (There was also a short period when *Partisan Review* merged with *Anvil,* Jack Conroy's magazine in the Midwest. But that marriage did not work out and *PR* decided to go it alone again.) All this time Rahv and I were becoming more and more fed up with the literary politics of the Communists, with their manipulation of theories, slogans, and writers, and we were coming to the conclusion that an independent literary movement could not exist within the orbit of the official Communist party. Hence we suspended publication until we could regroup and find new sources of financial support.

It is hard to reconstruct the atmosphere of literary and political life in the 30's, at least in those circles affected by the general radicalization of the time and by the influence of the Communist party. For this atmosphere was not simply a matter of extremes, as sometimes pictured by biased observers: it was neither a fool's paradise of utopian hopes and beliefs nor a wasteland of disillusionment and cynicism. It was a complex of contradictions that I tried to summarize in a piece I wrote in the 60's:*

> The going version of the story [of what happened in the 30's] is that the radical spirit ruled the 30's while the 40's and 50's were dedicated to conservatism, philistinism, chauvinism, and that now the pendulum is swinging once more to the Left. This picture is really too simple, and comes out of the sentimental association of radicalism with purity. It ignores the unsavory side of the radical movement, brought mostly by the Communists, just as it leaves out the legitimate distaste for party-line thinking that originally led many people to break with the ideas and organizations linked to the Communists. Still, the going version of the story does contain a certain amount of truth. The fact is that despite all the illusions and duplicities of the 30's, it was a time when human aims seemed more attractive than national goals and when articulate people talked more about the hope for an ideal society than the benefits of the existing one. It was a time when responsibility meant responsibility to ideas and convictions, justice seemed more important than expediency, the greater good meant more than the lesser evil, dreams seemed more cogent than reality.
>
> Mostly the 30's was a period of contradictions. It was a time of sense and nonsense, idealism and cynicism, morality and immorality, disinterestedness and power drive, and it was a time when it was possible to believe simultaneously in democracy and dictatorship, in an anti-human abstraction called History and in a moral idea of man usually regarded as unhistorical. It seemed possible to believe in everything and its opposite; and a theory of dialectics along with a policy of expediency were used to rationalize the untenable and to justify the reprehensible.
>
> If we are content to itemize these pluses and minuses and to reiterate that they add up to a state of contradiction, it is not so difficult to say what happened in the 30's, and what has happened since then. The trouble starts when we try to figure out the exact relation of sense to nonsense, of right to wrong, both in the radical tradition and in the swing away from it toward the Center and the Right. For this means we must decide whether the radicalism of the 30's was an aberration or a movement in the main line of history, or both, and whether the anti-radical mood that followed was a reaction against being taken in or a reconciliation with things as they are. What we think of these things has as much to do with the future as with the past. . . .

This is an abstract and backward look, but it does correspond to the situation that one lived through. For the short period I was connected with the John Reed Club, it seems to me I was constantly debating with myself, and with those who had abdicated before what they thought was history but was only the bureaucratized doctrines of the Communist party, whether the evils of the party outweighed its contribution to the socialist cause. It is still true and still one of the major dilemmas of radicalism that there are almost no democratic, socialist movements anywhere, strong enough and revolutionary enough to challenge the virtual monopoly of the Communists on the Left. But it was even truer and more disheartening in the 30's that if one broke with the Communists one had to retire from effective, radical, organized politics. Hence their hold on people who could not make more than one decisive political choice in their lives.

The relation of the party to its intellectual fellow-travelers is worth noting, particularly since there seems to be some parallel to the relation of the Russian intelligentsia with the Soviet govern-

* "What Happened in the 30's," COMMENTARY, September 1962.

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ment. Despite most accepted notions, there was no intellectual reign of terror, at least not within the fold, so to speak, though the treatment of outside opposition was ruthless. On the contrary, there was a kind of cynical acceptance of disaffection and even criticism of the party by writers, so long as it was not made public or generalized into a fundamental condemnation of the Soviet regime and its satellite parties. And such, I understand, is the position of intellectuals in the Soviet Union, who apparently are permitted to speak freely to each other about the party and the government and are persecuted for the most part only when they insist on airing their views outside elite circles. But of course, though such latitude kept cynical writers in bounds, it was only another sign of corruption and personal manipulation to those of us who were young enough to be mobile and who were genuinely interested in the political dimensions of literature and not in its controls. Still, I should emphasize that breaking was not easy for anyone, and for some it was traumatic—which is why so many writers moved so far to the Right after disengaging from the Communist Left.

At about this time, I met Fred Dupee, who was the literary editor of the *New Masses*. I told him about our plans, and tried to persuade him to leave the *New Masses*. Dupee was not an ideologue, nor very responsive to abstract political arguments, but he was a man of great sensibility and taste: hence he was aware of the political atmosphere around the *New Masses* and had no difficulty in grasping its ultimately corrupting effect on all literary activity. He said he had a friend, Dwight Macdonald, a classmate at Yale, now a writer for *Fortune,* who was moving Left, in the direction of the Communist party, whom he wanted us to meet. So we arranged to get together at my house one Sunday—which we referred to for a long time as "Bloody Sunday." As I recall, we were at it all day long; and I still have in my mind a picture of Rahv and myself backing Macdonald up against a wall, knocking down his arguments, firing questions without giving him time to answer, and constantly outshouting him. Now, if anyone has ever argued with Dwight Macdonald, he knows that it is not easy to outtalk him, even on theoretical questions, which was not where his talents lay. All I can say is that we were fired up enough with the rightness of our position to keep banging away, and Dwight was uncertain enough to listen, with the result that at the end of the day we were all agreed we should revive *Partisan Review* as an independent, radical literary journal. As for the money, Dwight and Fred had a friend, George Morris, a gifted abstract painter, who, they thought, might be interested and could help finance it. The sum we needed for a year, according to our calculations, was fifteen hundred dollars.

Mary McCarthy, another friend of Dupee and Macdonald, also joined our group, and the first issue of the new *Partisan Review* came out in December 1937. The editorial board consisted of Dupee, Macdonald, McCarthy, Morris, Rahv, and myself, with Nancy Macdonald as business manager. It was, as I look back, a remarkably aggressive and varied board, so aggressive and varied that one had to wonder how we were able to work together for so long. There were: Fred Dupee, as I have indicated, a man of great taste and sensibility; Dwight Macdonald, possessed of an enormous bustling energy, stubborn, opinionated, full of convictions in all areas, a very good journalist; Mary McCarthy, remarkably intelligent and astute, a first-rate prose talent, utterly committed to what she thought was right and honest; George Morris, shy and modest, but firm in his ideas about modern art; Rahv, intellectually alert and arrogant, ready to steamroller any opposition with an endless stream of heavy but wild and original rhetoric. Rahv and I, partly because of our political experience, supplied the theoretical base of the magazine, and tended to restrain the more adventurous instincts of some of the others. Perhaps we tended too much toward sobriety, but at a time when we were in an almost constant state of siege, it seemed necessary to be aware of the political and literary consequences of our acts. For, as expected, the Communists and those writers and editors under their influence kept up a steady attack and used every means of sabotage against us.

Some of the contents of the first issue are worth noting, because in its variety as well as its direction it set the tone for the future of the magazine. The issue included Delmore Schwartz's famous story, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," poems by Wallace Stevens and James Agee, essays by Edmund Wilson and Lionel Abel, reviews by Sidney Hook, Lionel Trilling, Arthur Mizener, and William Troy, and a long editorial, stating the aims of the magazine.

This statement was not free of the ponderous political rhetoric of the period. But it did, I believe, introduce for the first time the combination of social concern and literary standards that guided a new creative and critical movement. And it would be interesting to quote from it at length, if only to see how well some of its formulations have stood up:

> As our readers know, the tradition of aestheticism has given way to a literature which, for its origin and final justification, looks beyond itself and deep into the historic process. But the forms of literary editorship, at once exacting and adventurous, which characterized the magazines of the aesthetic revolt, were of definite cultural value; and these forms *Partisan Review* will wish to adapt to the literature of the new period. . . .
>
> But *Partisan Review* aspires to represent a new and dissident generation in American letters; it will not be dislodged from its independent position by any political campaign

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against it. And without ignoring the importance of the official movement, as a sign of the times we shall know how to estimate its authority in literature. But we shall also distinguish, wherever possible, between the tendencies of this faction itself and the work of writers associated with it. For our editorial accent falls chiefly on culture and its broader social determinants. Conformity to a given social ideology or to a prescribed attitude or technique, will not be asked of our writers. On the contrary, our pages will be open to any tendency which is relevant to literature in our time. Marxism in culture, we think, is first of all an instrument of analysis and evaluation; and if, in the last instance, it prevails over other disciplines, it does so through the medium of democratic controversy. Such is the medium that *Partisan Review* will want to provide in its pages.

BOTH the range and the direction of the magazine were indicated by some of the subjects and contributors in the early issues: André Gide on the Soviet Union, Edmund Wilson on Henry James, Meyer Schapiro on Lewis Mumford, James Burnham on American capitalism, William Phillips on Marxist aesthetics, F. W. Dupee on Malraux, Philip Rahv on contemporary fiction, Max Brod on Kafka, Harry Levin on Heine, William Troy on Thomas Mann, Leon Trotsky on art and politics, Clement Greenberg on avant-garde and kitsch, Harold Rosenberg on myth and history, Eliseo Vivas on John Dewey, R. P. Blackmur on current poetry, W. H. Auden on Yeats, Louis MacNeice's diary; fiction by John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, Franz Kafka, Ignazio Silone, Eleanor Clark, W. C. Williams, Charles Jackson; poetry by Elizabeth Bishop, Louise Bogan, E. E. Cummings, D. S. Savage, Julian Symons, Theodore Roethke, John Berryman, Randall Jarrell, Dylan Thomas, R. B. Fuller, George Barker, David Gascoyne, Wallace Stevens, Allen Tate, Robert Fitzgerald; also theater criticism by Mary McCarthy; "Letters from Prison" by Rosa Luxemburg; and a symposium on the "Situation in American Writing," with John Dos Passos, Allen Tate, James T. Farrell, Kenneth Fearing, Katherine Anne Porter, Wallace Stevens, Gertrude Stein, W. C. Williams, John Peale Bishop, Harold Rosenberg, Henry Miller, Sherwood Anderson, Louise Bogan, Lionel Trilling, Robert Penn Warren, Robert Fitzgerald, R. P. Blackmur, and Horace Gregory.

Clearly, this list is more than a roster of well-known figures and younger writers who have since become well-known. It indicates a bringing together of diverse talents, but more than that a bringing together of writers committed to modernism and literary innovation with radical social and political thinkers, most of whom were either non-Communist or anti-Communist. This was the first time in this country that such an idea of intellectual community had been forged, and perhaps the last time, for since then there has been a wholesale dispersal of writing and thinking. There have been many reasons for this intellectual decentralization, but the principal ones seem to me to come from the brain drain by the mass media, from the drifting of writers across the country, mostly to universities, which have tended to set up at least the appearance of intellectual foci, from the large and varied geography of the country, and from the confusion of chic with advanced art and thought. And it is hard to say whether it is a cause or consequence, but the break-up of this community has been accompanied by a breakdown of old beliefs and assumptions in both politics and the arts and an enormous diversification of ideas, styles, and goals. Those who are pleased with this state of affairs refer to it benignly as pluralism, those who take a negative view think of it as a collapse of values and standards. In any case, both responses might be exaggerated, for as we know, the past always looks more cohesive in retrospect.

But for those who are especially troubled by the lack of a center today, it might throw some light on the differences between the 30's and the present situation, to consider why it was possible in *PR*'s infancy to bring together in one magazine so many of the gifted and adventurous minds of the time. For one thing, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the commercial publications, particularly those in the middle range of culture, had not yet thought of coopting serious writers by offering fees—and the illusion of an audience—of a size only a purist or a madman could refuse. In addition, the time was ripe for intellectual fusion. Modernist and experimental writers were looking for a social base; and writers who had acquired a historical consciousness were both sufficiently disillusioned with the Communists and sufficiently loyal to their radical experience to feel a kinship with each other. It was a time when literature and politics were able to coexist, without either one trying to absorb or destroy the other.

Because it has been too complex for easy definition, there is a good deal of disagreement about what has happened since. On the whole, though, it might be said that the following period has seen an erosion of the idea of a central tradition and a shift in the modernist sensibility—though I do not think, as some traditionalists claim, that modernism is dead. But it would be too schematic to see these changes simply as signs of cultural decline, for while there has been some adaptation to the cultural situation, there also has been a good deal of serious writing maintaining the old adversary role through styles of intransigence and experiment. However, this phase of our literary history—and the place of *Partisan Review*—is another story.

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# The Making of a Dissident

*Efim Davidovich*

COLONEL EFIM DAVIDOVICH, *hero of World War II and in recent years a leader in the struggle for Jewish rights in the Soviet Union, died in Minsk on April 24 of this year, at the age of fifty-two. Davidovich was the author of numerous petitions and open letters to Soviet authorities on behalf of dissidents and the right of Jews to emigrate to Israel. While his own repeated requests for permission to emigrate were denied during his lifetime, this past October his widow and family were finally allowed to leave the Soviet Union for Israel, where they now live, and to bury his body there; it has been interred on the Mount of Olives. Davidovich was at work on the autobiographical fragment which follows in late February and March when he was stricken with his final illness. The manuscript was brought out of the Soviet Union and appears here in English for the first time.*

I was born in Minsk on May 2, 1924 and spent my childhood in one of the crooked little streets of the Komarovka district—Kazakova Lane, it was called. Years later, when I read Sholem Aleichem, it occurred to me that he must have had our district in mind when he wrote about Kasrilevka.

I still remember that street affectionately, with its dirt road and its two rows of wooden houses, and think fondly of the people who lived there—especially the old writer and intellectual Munves, in the first house, and in the last the huge family of Sofia Kalapuchika and her blind husband Simon-Leib, a deeply religious and honest old man with crooked legs that ached all the time. Our street was populated by shoemakers, tailors, coachmen, blacksmiths, salesmen, and hairdressers, as well as one Communist—the carpenter Leyzer Rogovin who had two sons working for the NKVD and who, like most of the other residents, was only semi-literate. It was thanks to these sons that most of the adult males on our street, including my father, ended up in jail at one time or another during the 30's for refusing to give up their religion. (A few of our other neighbors, like Fyveh Ruderman, the butcher, and his family, were luckier; instead of going to jail they went to Siberia and in this way managed to survive the war.) Even blind old Simon-Leib Kalapuchik of the aching legs was arrested during this period, but luckily for his huge and perpetually hungry clan it was not Simon-Leib but his wife Sofia who was the chief provider. Setting herself up in business in the horse market near our street, she sold cold water in summer (at one kopek a glass) and hot tea in winter, resting her huge samovar on one of the market stalls and keeping a warm pot under her skirt so as not to freeze to death.

Like his father before him, my father Aaron had been a coachman, but he was also a veteran soldier. From 1913 to 1923, he served in the army and fought in both World War I and with the Soviet forces in the civil war, winning the highest distinction in World War I that was possible for a Jew in the Czar's army: the St. George Cross and promotion to the rank of lance corporal. Toward the end of the civil war, he was wounded quite seriously in the leg and came home on crutches, but he was still very strong despite his injury, and remained capable of great physical exertion. To support his family my father worked all the time—during the day as a porter hauling huge loads and at night as a watchman in a government printing house, where he would stretch out to sleep on the heaped-up piles of paper. This second job was necessary not so much for the wage, which was very low, but because the Soviet authorities did not trust individuals who were not connected with some official government undertaking.

My mother, Sheina-Basia, was very intelligent and a good wife and mother, but completely illiterate, signing all official documents with a cross until I taught her, as a beginning schoolboy, to make the two Russian initials for her name. De-



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spite this, or perhaps because of it, both she and my father were passionately intent—like most other Jews of that era—on providing their children with the best education possible.

The language spoken in our house was Yiddish, and we were all called by our Jewish, not our Russian, names. For this I am still grateful to my parents, for it enabled me, many years later, at the age of fifty, to teach myself to read and write Yiddish with no difficulty, and also made it much easier for me to learn Hebrew than it would have been otherwise. This was not true of my friends' homes where the parents made it a point to speak Russian to their children, though they spoke it very badly. If nothing else, they did manage to accomplish one thing: there is scarcely a member of my generation in Russia today who knows any Yiddish at all.

When I first started going to school there were still Jewish schools in Minsk, along with Russian, Bielorussian, and Polish ones, but unfortunately I was not sent to one, for my parents were under the impression that all schools had the same curriculum. Perhaps they were even right, for the non-Jewish schools did teach the works of certain Soviet-Jewish writers at that time, as well as Sholem Aleichem in translation, and I doubt that the exclusively Jewish schools had any specific Jewish content beyond this. In any case, when it came time to find a school for us, my mother proceeded on the "geographical" principle, picking whichever school was closest to where we lived so her sons would not, God forbid, be run over by a truck on their way to school. As a result, I and my two brothers, Moshe-Haim and Avrom-Itche, went to a Bielorussian school while Leyzer, the youngest, attended a Russian one.

No doubt because of the emphasis on education at home, I was a very good student and a passionate reader, though nothing quite equaled my triumph at the age of ten or so when I took charge of all correspondence for our family and friends, and became a rival of our old writer, Munves, who was the official letter-writer for our street. Unlike Munves, however, who charged a ruble for each petition he drew up or letter he composed to relatives in America or at the front, I did it for nothing—or, more precisely, for the praise my mother would receive from admiring acquaintances: who knows, when he grows up he may become a scholar or even a famous writer like Munves himself!

The period I am describing could be called the golden age of Soviet Jewry—never once did I experience anti-Semitism. Minsk, it is true, was a largely Jewish city and most of my friends were Jews, but there were also Russian and Polish boys on our street and at school with whom I was close friends; never in dealing with these comrades did I ever discern the slightest trace of national antagonism or ill will. At our Bielorussian school, whose principal happened to be Jewish, the Soviet doctrine of "friendship between peoples" was inculcated from the very earliest grades. The teacher would list the various nationalities in the classroom and go on to explain that all of us—Russians, Poles, Bielorussians, Jews, and Tatars—were equal, and that the principle of "friendship between peoples" meant that we were to love and respect one another with no regard for national differences.

Unfortunately, only Russian citizens who are over fifty today can remember this. Nowadays the principle of "friendship between peoples" is more likely to be explained in Soviet classrooms as a struggle between the Soviet Union and its political enemies—specifically the "Zionists," bent on achieving world dominion, on stealing the rights of the glorious Palestinians, etc. Concluding such a harangue, the teacher is likely to call for eternal vigilance against the enemies of freedom, while looking sternly at the handful of Jewish children in her class. Small wonder that after such an education Jewish children in Russia feel rejected, tainted, and miserable, or that many of them react by becoming enraged at their parents for being Jewish.

One such case was the son of a childhood friend of mine who was so ashamed of his origins that he gave a false name when signing up for pioneer camp and begged his mother not to visit him there because she looked too Jewish. Another was the small daughter of a colleague in the military who came home from school one day demanding to know whether it was really true, as she had heard in her fourth-grade class, that she was Jewish, and upon being told that it was, grew so hysterical that a doctor had to be called in. Yet a third and far more terrible instance was the case of Grisha Gunnik, a sixteen-year-old schoolboy and son of a partisan who was ambushed and murdered by his classmates on his way home from school. Later the boys explained to the judge that they had had nothing against Grisha personally, and in fact had been waiting for some other boy with whom they had a score to settle. When the second boy failed to appear, they had killed Grisha instead, since he too was Jewish.

There are, alas, all too many stories like these in today's Russia, signifying the end of that golden era which I knew as a child.

THE second period of my life coincides with the war years. I was seventeen when the war broke out on June 27, 1941. Ten days before I had been sent on maneuvers, along with other members of my high-school class, to a small town somewhere in the neighborhood of Brest, and we were still there when the war started. So close were we to the border that the Germans occupied the town during the first six hours, rolling westward down the highway in their

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mechanized columns as smoothly as though they were on parade. The chief engineer of our unit, who was also the group leader, told us we were on our own, and advised us to hide out in the forest for a few days and wait to be rescued by Marshal Budenny's cavalry, reputed at that time to be on the way to Berlin. Luckily, I did not take his advice—though still young I was learning to be skeptical of Soviet propaganda. Instead, I made up my mind, along with the one other Jew in our group, Lenya Slovin, to try to get back to Minsk by whatever means we could find. No sooner had the Germans appeared than a certain estrangement could be felt between us and the rest of our comrades. As one fellow put it, who up to then had been an ardent patriot and the very model of a young Soviet Komsomolnik, "Brothers, we have nothing to fear from the Germans. It is not as though we were Jews, after all. . . ."

After two days of traveling through the back roads of the Ukraine, Lenya and I arrived in the town of Orsha on June 29 only to learn from a group of refugees, which included Lenya's father, that the rest of our journey was pointless: Minsk had fallen to the Germans two days before. Never again, though I did not know it at the time, would I see my parents, or my three brothers, all of whom perished in the Minsk ghetto, along with most of the other members of our large family.

For a week we stayed on in Orsha; then, with the Germans coming close, a small group of us, all Minskovites, made our way eastward, arriving in the town of Syzran on the Volga on July 13. Here we managed to find some sort of work and housing, and decided to remain for as long as we could. Though most of us had not known each other before the war, and though we were a very mixed group in terms of age, occupation, and so forth, we had become by now the closest of friends, bound together by a common sorrow for our families that had been left behind, and by a common sense of our destiny as Jews. We spent as much time together as we could, and tried to help each other in every way possible. It was during this period in Syzran that I experienced for the first time the hostility of the native Russians toward Jews, but here too that I first discovered the meaning of Jewish solidarity. Most of the people in our group were the remaining fragments of what had been large families, and they taught me much that I had not known before about Jewish family life and the character of our people, as well as about Jewish history and tradition, and helped me also to perfect my knowledge of spoken Yiddish. With all these people I have maintained close ties for the past thirty-five years. Some of them managed to find surviving relatives after the war ended; others acquired new families. Perhaps the most tragic history in our group was that of Berl Breitman, the furrier, who lost his wife and three of his children in the ghetto and his oldest son at the front during the battle of Warsaw. Only his youngest daughter, Alla, evacuated from Minsk with a pioneer camp, managed to survive. He found her later in a children's home, gravely ill with diabetes. Her right leg has been amputated to the knee, she is deaf and blind, and he has nursed her all these years. Now an old man of eighty-four and scarcely able to breathe, Berl is almost helpless himself. There is so much human sorrow, and so much Jewish sorrow, in the world. . . .

In 1942 I was called up to the army and shortly thereafter assigned to officers' training school at Kuybyshev—the first stage in a military career that would last for twenty-seven years. The course at Kuybyshev was, like all such courses at that time, very rigorous and very much accelerated, for there was a crying shortage of officers at the front. For a period of nine months we had twelve hours of instruction a day outdoors—mainly in the field and at target practice. The only classes held indoors were the ones devoted to political instruction, and these we often slept through, dozing off in the unaccustomed warmth. On our "days off" we would go wood-collecting, walking in single file to a forest some twenty kilometers away, and returning home in the same fashion, shouldering our piles of wood. This fuel was used only for cooking, for the barracks were unheated, even in the dead of winter. But it hardly mattered; there were so many of us that our collective breathing warmed the place up.

My memories of these nine months are not pleasant. I was almost always hungry, the weather was freezing, and I spent most of my time under the supervision of crude, petty-minded types—the classic non-commissioned officers described so well by the writer A. I. Kuprin. Yet the physical regime was easier for me than for a lot of others, thanks partly to the strong constitution I inherited from my father, partly to my training in sports at high school, and most of all to my determination not to give the others a chance to deride me as a Jew—an activity which was already coming into fashion.

In May 1943 I was graduated with the rank of junior lieutenant and sent to the front as commander of a rifle platoon in the guards division, which was then fighting around the Kursk Bulge. Within a short time I was good friends with my fellow officers and had earned the respect of the men under my command, many of whom were old enough to be my father. To this day I remember the first attack I led, issuing orders in strict accordance with the 1942 Battle Code of the infantry, and having them obeyed with absolute precision —I might have been back at officers' school, executing a field maneuver. I felt no fear and was perfectly sure I would not be killed—a certainty which remained with me throughout the war. In

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general, it is easier in my opinion to lead an attack on the battlefield than it is to take part in one, not because officers are in less danger than enlisted men, but because they have more responsibility. An ordinary soldier going into battle knows how small his chances of survival are; to advance under fire, therefore, he must consciously go against his natural instinct of self-preservation. An officer, on the other hand, though prey to these same instincts, is so busy protecting the men under his command he has no time to think of personal safety. (I am speaking here only of real commanders, of course, not cowards, though there is no shortage of those either.)

My job as a platoon commander was to wait in a position about 100 or 150 meters from the German lines, and repel the attacks of their infantry and tanks. If the tanks managed to get through, it became the business of the artillery in the rear to destroy them, and we then attempted to cut off the advancing infantry. This was difficult and dangerous work and though there were romantic episodes as well, I will not go into them for they hardly count. What counts is the daily job of the infantry which does, as is well known, the "dirty work" of the war, and has the highest casualty rate. An attack is like rain, and the attacker rarely remains "dry"—he is either killed or wounded.

I was wounded five times in the course of the war. The first time, in August 1943, during a counterattack by our platoon at Belgorod, I was hit quite seriously in the left leg by an exploding land mine, and operated on in the field hospital that took care of our division. Because there were so many injured, the doctors were forced to operate at top speed, as though working on an assembly line, and there were no x-rays to help them determine the extent of the injury. I can still remember the excruciating self-control it took not to cry out as the doctor probed and cut away at my leg for some forty minutes without anesthesia of any kind. I was nineteen at the time, and much influenced by the war novels of Korchagin and Ostrovsky—for a soldier to give in to pain would have been unseemly, in my opinion. When it was all over, the doctor, taking me for a Gentile, praised me to the nurses: "Look, such a young fellow and he did not moan even once—he was able to overcome the pain. And that Jew over there, who looks like such a healthy young man, never stopped yelling and screaming even though his wound was minor." So weak was I that I simply did not have the strength to tell him I too was a Jew.

After the operation I was sent to a military hospital in the Tambov region for further treatment —not far from where my father had been treated for a similar leg wound twenty years earlier, and where I met and fell in love with the nurse who would later become my wife. From here I should have been sent to a reserve detachment in the rear —the customary procedure with wounded officers —but I managed to bypass this regulation and get sent back to the front, though with my leg still in bandages. It seemed to me that in a war against fascism Jews belonged in the front lines—among other reasons, to refute the lies gaining currency at that time about Jews sitting in Tashkent and making money while Russian soldiers fought.

In the years that followed I fought in the Ukraine, in Poland, in Germany, and finally, on the last day of the war, in Czechoslovakia, where I took part in the storming of Prague. When the war ended I was twenty-one, a captain in the Russian army, and the proud possessor of a drawerful of medals and decorations.

To the great joy of victory was added a great sorrow over what had befallen the Jews of Europe. As town after town was liberated in the closing days of the war, we learned that each one had had its own Babi Yar. Traveling across the Ukraine and Poland in the wake of the retreating German armies, and passing through what had once been vigorous Jewish communities, I came upon only two survivors: a middle-aged man from Lvov whose family had all been killed, and a seven-year-old boy whom we took with us on the way to Volyn—a skeleton of a child with bluish skin and a dead look in his eyes that would change now and then to a look of terror. It was a miracle that life still remained in that emaciated body. At first the boy barely answered my questions, but when I began talking to him in Yiddish his eyes came to life a bit and he told me the terrible but all too common story of how his whole family had been murdered. Later on, when the war was over, I met other Jewish survivors, but though I had no precise information about it, I knew instinctively that my family in Minsk had not succeeded in escaping the common fate.

THE golden age of Soviet Jewry came to an end in my opinion with the beginning of the war, though there are people older than I who point to the 1939 Soviet-German pact and claim this happened much earlier. Perhaps it did, but in my experience, which is all I am attempting to document here, the first tangible, and overwhelming, evidence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union dates from June 1941 when it became clear that no effort was being made to counteract the brutal anti-Semitic propaganda of the Nazis, either in the Red Army or among the population as a whole. The only exceptions to the general Soviet silence on this subject were a few articles by Ilya Ehrenburg and one or two other well-known Jewish writers, but eventually these articles too were suppressed by order of the central committee, and no mention was permitted in print of either Nazi atrocities or Jewish heroism at the front. Jews were also beginning to be barred during this same period from high military and political posts,

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though there were many Jews serving as ordinary soldiers and junior officers, as well as many in charge of divisions, companies, and battalions, like General Lev, who held the designation Hero of the Soviet Union, and was commander of a famous infantry division. There were also many Jews working in the "brain trust," and in the operations sections, as well as many who held posts as heads of staff. One of them, Major Gruzenberg, who was head of the operations section of the division staff quarters in which I fought, was especially memorable for the way he combined profound analytic skill with high military training and personal courage. Another person of high military culture was Colonel Zilper, our divisional chief of staff, who was later replaced by another Jewish officer, Colonel Brevdo. But even distinguished officers like these remained for the most part at the lower rungs of the command ladder, and were seldom given access to the very highest command posts, with the exception of one or two brilliant military talents like General Kreizer, who had distinguished himself from the very first days of the war in the fighting around Borisov, and who retained continuous command of an army almost throughout the war. In fairness I should note too that Jews who did achieve high positions did not for the most part stress their Jewishness. There were quite a few Jewish officers and soldiers who concealed the fact, partly out of fear of what might happen if they fell into German hands, partly out of fear of a bullet in the back from one of our own anti-Semites, who had begun to understand that they could do such things with impunity. I myself served under one such officer, a brave and intelligent man who before the war had been a bookkeeper in a Jewish kolkhoz in the Crimea and who later died a hero's death during the storming of Zolochev. One day this lieutenant confided to me in darkest secrecy that he was not a Bielorussian, as most people thought, but a Jew, though I had known it all along. Such an officer, who turns out to be a secret Jew and is a highly sympathetic character, appears in Simonov's novel, *People Are Not Born Soldiers,* which was written during the "thaw" following Stalin's death, when one could write such things.

By citing these examples I do not mean to suggest that all the brave commanders who died at the front were Jews, or that the whole army was contaminated with anti-Semitism, for it was not. My closest comrades at the front knew I was a Jew and were indifferent to it—the dearest one of all, Volodya Shakhtarin from Gorky, was hit by a German bullet while reciting the poetry of Yesenin, and died in my arms. Still, I would not chance a bet as to how many of these noble comrades, if they are still alive, have been able to withstand the government's incessant barrage of anti-Semitic propaganda, and would still be indifferent to my Jewishness.

When the war ended I decided to remain in the army and become a career officer. For the first few years I served in the north. These were the years of the first systematic anti-Semitic persecution, of the struggle against the "rootless cosmopolitans," of the murder of the great actor and director Solomon Mikhoels, of the establishment of secret quotas against Jews, and of the purging of Jews from the party apparatus. Such was the climate of the period that a small group of us—fellow Jewish officers and our wives who spent time together singing, playing the guitar, and telling jokes—were denounced on one occasion as subversives by the official responsible for political affairs in our division. Luckily, our KGB section was headed at that time by a Jew—relieved of his post shortly thereafter—and the denunciation went no further. I should add here that the troubles of those years were also accompanied by one joyous event—the establishment of the state of Israel, though I want to stress that neither I nor my comrades had any thought whatever of emigrating to Israel in those years.

In 1949 my stint in the north ended, and I was accepted for further training at the Frunze Academy, the oldest and most distinguished school for command and staff personnel in the Soviet army. Though it was almost as hard in those years for a Jew to get in as for the proverbial camel to get through the eye of the needle, I managed to do it thanks to my war record, my high score in the entrance examination, and the fact that at twenty-five I was the youngest of the applicants.

I stayed at the Academy for three years—graduating with distinction in November 1952—and would have gone on to post-graduate studies in the military-scientific field, but my name was dropped from the list of candidates with no explanation. Since this was 1952, no explanation was necessary. The Jewish doctors who were to figure in Stalin's vicious show trial were already under arrest, and the air was thick with menace. Still, my record was very good, and I could not simply be relegated to the reserves without disobeying Stalin's express orders on the subject of gifted military personnel. Instead, I was assigned to the military district of Bielorussia, where I was to serve as lecturer in an advanced training program for officers.

The next four years were happy ones from a professional point of view—I liked my work and had no complaints—but for Soviet Jews, myself included, the times were growing worse and worse. Every day the newspapers were full of anti-Semitic incitements, more and more Jews were being called up on criminal charges, more and more Jews were being purged both from the government and the party machine. A frequent charge in the army at that time—and probably in other places as well—was that Jews had "illegally" appropriated Russian names. Thus, a Jewish major who was one of my

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colleagues in Bielorussia at the time was sentenced to ten days in prison for calling himself Evgenyi Isaakovich, when the archives in his home town listed him as Zelik Isaakovich. Such humiliating orders were read to us by the dozens every week, as part of the ongoing campaign to unmask "underground" Jews—all those whose documents described them as Russians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Yakuts, Japanese, or Malayans—so that not a single Jew should escape disclosure.

To engage in anti-Semitic slanders at the time—the more absurd, the better—was considered a mark of loyalty to Stalin, so our faculty room was the scene of daily conversation about such things as the use of blood from Christian infants in the baking of matzah, the attempt by some Jewish dentists in Minsk to infect their patients with cancer, the dastardly suicide of a well-known Jewish professor of medicine who had allegedly killed himself to escape the just anger of the Russian people. (The professor in question, M. N. Shapiro, actually lived for another twenty years, and died not too long ago at the age of ninety.) Day after day this talk went on until one day the elderly Colonel Mediannik, a Ukrainian by birth and a long-time veteran of the front, simply ordered a stop to it, recalling that he had heard precisely the same kind of ravings as a child in Kiev during the Beilis trial. Mediannik did not deny the guilt of the Jewish doctors—this was being reported in the press, after all—but he asserted that a whole people could not be held responsible for a few criminals, and recalled how bravely the Jews had fought during the war. No one objected, but there was a long silence in the room which lasted till it was time for the next class. That same evening we were urgently summoned to a meeting with the colonel in charge of political affairs of our section and informed that Colonel Mediannik had been relieved of his responsibilities. There is no telling what would have happened to this brave man, but fortunately all this took place on March 3, 1953. Three days later Stalin died, a new era dawned, and the case of Colonel Mediannik was consigned to oblivion. To this day whenever I meet that honest old soldier we remember the episode and compare it with the similar things that are happening today.

During the "thaw" that followed the Jewish question grew somewhat less acute and the Jews in Russia had a breathing spell. For me also the years that followed were good ones, and represented the most creative period of my military career. First as commander of a mechanized battalion, then as deputy chief of staff of a tank division, I fulfilled the most difficult assignments successfully and enjoyed the respect and love of my comrades and the appreciation of my superior officers. In 1961, having published a number of articles on operations and troop training, I was made a district staff officer—unusual for a Jew even in those relatively liberal times—and given command of a model company which was one of the best in the Soviet army. Three years later, I was promoted to the rank of colonel—the highest to which a Jew can realistically aspire in the Soviet Union today—but exertion had taken its toll. I suffered the first of several heart attacks and was transferred to a sedentary job in military training outside the army. Though I had recovered sufficiently by 1967 to organize a new large-scale military training program in Bielorussia, my career—in ways that I could not foresee—was nearing its end.

In June 1967, war broke out in the Middle East, and the respite enjoyed by Jews in the Soviet Union came to an end. I was in Borisov at the time, in charge of a tactical training operation with a tank company (which lasted, by an odd coincidence, exactly as long as the war did) and still remember the gloom of the anti-Semites when Israel's victory, after the false information of the first few days of fighting, could no longer be concealed—immediately they set to work concocting alibis for the Israeli triumph. Driving back from Borisov on June 12 with two colonels of the Black Hundred persuasion, I countered these lies with all the eloquence at my command, and it is a symptom of the confusion prevailing in high Soviet circles after the June war that my remarks did not lead to a denunciation. Or if they did, that it got lost somewhere along the way.

These remarks were not the first I had made in public critical of Soviet policies. In Grodno, a few years earlier, I had sharply criticized Soviet discrimination against Jews in the presence of a large number of senior officers, and, within the bounds of my authority as a commanding officer, I had always protested racism and anti-Semitism wherever I found it. As a professional soldier, however, I could not participate beyond these limits in the liberation struggle of my own people. In November 1968, however, the last reason for refraining from such activity was removed. I suffered a second severe heart attack, retired from the army, and, though a semi-invalid, threw myself wholeheartedly into the struggle against anti-Semitism and for the honor and rights of the Jewish people.

The response to my efforts was a systematic campaign of harassment on the part of the Soviet authorities, culminating in the decision to expel me from the party, to strip me of my rank and pension, and to institute proceedings against me for anti-Soviet agitation. In October 1972, in a session before the politburo of the central committee of Bielorussia, I confronted my accusers and told them they were nothing but ordinary fascists by another name. It had taken me a lifetime to shed my illusions and discover that the noble statements about equality and justice contained in party manifestoes were a pack of lies.

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Nor is it only Jews who are held down in Russia, though they are at the very lowest rung of the social order, and held responsible for whatever goes wrong in the country. It has become crystal clear during the postwar period that racism and discrimination against nationalities are a matter of official government policy, and that the first and foremost criterion in determining who shall advance and who shall be kept back in Soviet society is national and racial origin. At the very top of the pyramid are the Russians, or—as they were called before the Revolution—the Great Russians. They alone are held to be of the very first quality. Next in order, and possessing almost equal rights, are the Ukrainians and the Bielorussians, though even they are occasionally made to feel that they are something less than 100 per-cent equal. After these two groups come all the others—the peoples of the Caucasus, of Central Asia, of the Volga region, and of the Baltic states, each with its own strictly defined place in the "indivisible fraternal family of peoples."

The more ancient the people and the richer its history, its culture, and its contribution to world civilization, the more it is disliked by the leadership and by its "elder brother," the Great Russian people. For example, both the Georgians and the Armenians are treated with hostility, but the Armenians are more disliked. The Yakuts and the Evenks of Central Asia, on the other hand, as well as a few of the remaining smaller peoples, are treated with condescending kindness—singled out for special favor by this same benevolent "elder brother." Of equality, however, there is none for any of these peoples.

In conclusion I must say that I have never felt any hostility toward the Russian people—or toward any of the other peoples on this planet—and I still do not believe that the majority of them are contaminated by chauvinism or anti-Semitism. The Russian people are close to my heart. I was born and grew up on Russian soil, I was raised in the culture of Russia, I expressed my love, as the poet Yulian Tuvim put it, in the Russian language. Always I remember that the Russian people has given us not only the Arakcheyevs and the Ignatievs and the Purishkeviches, but also the Sakharovs. I believe the time will come when the Russian people will condemn its own poisoners, just as the German people did after 1945. I also believe that the place of every honest Jew is in the ranks of his own people, in the struggle for the restoration and strengthening of his ancient homeland. I consider this struggle a memorial to those who were murdered by the Nazis and a sacred obligation to my people and to myself.

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# Race and Truth

*Michael Novak*

Is a truthful discussion of racial matters impossible in the present generation in this country? Let us suppose for a moment (it is not a supposition I would defend) that the souls of whites and blacks are so corrupted by relations of inequality that no human being, white or black, is capable of perceiving the truth of these relations undistorted. We are each, in other words, irredeemably prejudiced and lost in darkness; truth is unable to abide among us. In that case (again, a situation I by no means concede), persons trying to be truthful would have to pay each other the compliment of a civil skepticism. They would systematically regard all utterances in racial matters with a grain, or more than a grain, of salt. They would assume that most of what passes as "enlightened opinion" on matters of race, emanating from blacks or from whites, is partly prejudice, partly euphemism, partly nonsense, and only partly true; perhaps, ultimately, true only in such a distorted context as to be even in that kernel of truth profoundly untrue.

Even in the worst case, then, one would still have a method, however negative, for getting closer to the truth. One would doubt every utterance, break it up into its components, and coldly evaluate the partial merits of each.

Contrast this worst of all possible cases with the best of all possible cases. Suppose one could count on good faith, clear and unflinching intelligence, total courage, and the highest possible esteem for truth-telling. Suppose euphemism and evasion were scorned. Even in that case—given the complexity, difficulty, and ineradicable subjectivity of the matter—one would still examine each claim skeptically. In worst and in best cases, in other words, one's method would be the same.

Yet no such method is in evidence in these United States today, where racial matters continue to be discussed not with civil skepticism, but in outrageous innocence. Certain opinions pass without inspection; others—on plainly ideological grounds—are rejected without inspection. It is as though no one dares to *think*, no one dares to *question*. The overriding current requirement is that one march in rank. Intellectual muggers stand ready to discipline those who stray. New extortion rackets function: conform, or take your punishment. Government funding for research, university jobs, and public reputations hang in the balance. Any who venture onto the terrain of racial relations are subject to summary, harsh, and irretrievable smears, innuendo, and public denunciation.

Take what are, even on prima-facie inspection, four instances of intellectual double-think:

1. In 1954, the courts ruled that in educational placement there shall be no discrimination with respect to race. Within twenty years, this decree has been stood on its head to read: in educational placement, race is to be the guiding principle.

2. So long as the work of Professor James Coleman seemed to support the imposition of busing as an instrument of racial integration, Coleman was highly praised. Since his findings led him to doubt the long-range success of busing, attacks upon his work, his integrity, and his person have multiplied. Professor Coleman has expressed his own shock at suddenly finding himself the target of vilification, after having once experienced adulation for work in the same field. He doubts whether younger scholars, less established in their fields, could withstand such assaults.

3. Writing in the *New York Review of Books* (September 30, 1976), Professor George M. Frederickson summarizes recent waves of historical scholarship since the publication of Stanley Elkins's *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1959; 3rd edition, 1976). What is startling in this summary is its frank description of the role of ideology as the driving force in the search for evidence:

> Elkins's view of what slavery had done to its black victims became increasingly unacceptable in the 60's not simply, or even mainly, because of its inherent flaws. Flaws there were, but much of the bitter antagonism generated by the book was due to its direct collision with emerging ideologies. Its argument, first of all, was anathema to proponents of black nationalism, whose search for historical sources of pride and community led them to reject the idea that their grandfathers were dehumanized "Sambos." Furthermore Elkins's thesis seemed to provide support for a new "racism" based on the concept of "cultural deprivation," which was replacing crude notions of biological inferiority as a ra-

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tionale for denying equal justice to Afro-Americans. Elkins's premise of black docility and passivity was also incompatible with a New Left historiography that took it for granted that oppressed classes always resist their oppressors.

First, apparently, come the desires; then the reasons.

4. We have now a considerable literature (Eugene D. Genovese, Fogel and Engerman, Herbert G. Gutman) whose role is, in effect, to show how slavery was better for blacks than liberty now is. This literature celebrates the condition of blacks under slavery, compared to their conditions under liberty, and now describes the *latter* as the truly significant "oppressive white system."

What is it about the black experience that induces in so many good minds, black and white, a positive lust for corruptions of elementary sense? Why do the normal circuits of the mind suddenly burn away? In explanation, feelings of guilt are often adduced. Next offered is everyone's fear of being branded, if white, a racist, or, if black, an Uncle Tom. More profound explanations begin with Hegel's discussion of the mutual corruption inherent in the master-slave relationship, persistent long after its termination. But I think it less fruitful, wading in such murky waters, to seek an exact explanation for dishonesty than to diagnose exactly the mechanisms of its employment—not to ask why but to point out how the process operates.

As it happens, there is a useful example to hand in a series of recent public comments about Daniel P. Moynihan's controversial 1965 government planning paper, "The Negro Family." The occasion for many of the comments was the publication of Herbert G. Gutman's massive new book, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1790-1925*,* which was treated in *Time, Newsweek,* the New York *Times Book Review,* the daily *Times,* and other publications, and was characterized by the author himself as a major attack on Moynihan's paper. Now this is an odd thing on the face of it. Moynihan is not a historian; his paper was exceedingly brief, and his historical references, far briefer still, were entirely drawn from the researches of scholars in the field, both black and white. How can a thick, expensive, scholarly book like Gutman's properly be viewed as an assault on a short government pamphlet? Moreover, much of what Moynihan had to say in 1965 is now conventional wisdom, even among those who attacked him then and attack him now.

Nevertheless, eleven years after the Moynihan report was first made public, feelings still run high. He was branded a racist then, and the charge is still being made. Why? Is there any correlation between what Moynihan actually said and the criticisms that have been leveled against him? And if there is not—as I hope to show there is not—what accounts for the unrelenting animus which his report so clearly aroused then and still arouses now?

Moynihan's paper, which cited the high and growing rate of family break-ups among blacks and called for "national action" to help remedy the situation, was issued in March 1965 for the Office of Policy Planning and Research (Department of Labor), and is reprinted in the landmark study by Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (1967). The pamhplet is only 78 pages long, more than half of which consist of official (and undisputed) government statistics.

The argument of the Moynihan reports is summarized by Rainwater and Yancey in four steps:

1. The Negro family suffers the following deterioration: nearly one-quarter of urban Negro marriages are dissolved; nearly one-quarter of Negro births are illegitimate; almost one-fourth of Negro families are female-headed; the trend line of welfare dependency is strongly up.

2. The roots of this problem lie in slavery, Reconstruction, and above all in urbanization, unemployment, and in an inadequate wage system.

3. Since Negro fertility is much higher than white, especially among the poorest blacks, the number of black children who suffer family economic disadvantages is likely to increase steadily. Correlations with many other pathologies—delinquency, drug use, unemployability, weak self-image, etc.—are high.

4. Government intervention is needed to "enhance the stability and resources of the Negro American family."

"To sociologists and psychologists with a professional interest in the situation of the Negro American," Rainwater and Yancey comment, "the report presented little that was new or startling." The basic paradigm for Moynihan's analysis was laid down by a black sociologist, E. Franklin Frazier, and its contemporary grounding lay mainly in the work and the vocabulary of a black psychologist, Kenneth B. Clark. Most of Moynihan's figures and analyses were borrowed from the mammoth study of Harlem undertaken under Clark's leadership. Clark's own book, *Dark Ghetto,* appeared almost in the same month as Moynihan's paper, and drew heavily on the same research. Much of the language of the Moynihan report appears also in Clark.

For example, Clark appears to have been the originator of the key concept of "pathology." His text uses it frequently: "the pathology of the ghetto," "the tangle of community and personal pathology," etc.; an entire Chapter (5) is entitled "The Pathology of the Ghetto." An important section of Chapter 3 is called "The Cycle of Family Instability," and a section of Chapter 4, "The Psychology of the Ghetto," is called "The Negro Matriarchy and the Distorted Masculine Image." In the first of these sections, Clark reports:

* Pantheon, 704 pp., $15.95.

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> Children and young people who grow up in a community in which a large proportion of families have no father in the home, a community in which 40 per cent of the men and 47 per cent of the women ages fourteen or over are unmarried, find it difficult, if not almost impossible, to know what an "adequate" family is like. The cycle of family instability continues uninterrupted.

In the second of these sections, Clark writes:

> Sexual hierarchy has played a crucial role in the structure and pathology of the Negro family. Because of the system of slavery in which the Negro male was systematically used as a stud and the Negro female used primarily for purposes of breeding or for the gratification of the white male, the only source of family continuity was through the female, the dependence of the child on his mother. . . . The Negro male was, therefore, driven to seek status in ways which seemed either antisocial, escapist, socially irresponsible. The pressure to find relief from his intolerable psychological position seems directly related to the continued high incidence of desertions and broken homes in Negro ghettos.

No storm broke over Clark's head for these assertions.

THE more one studies the actual text of the Moynihan report, the more one marvels at the subsequent public discussion. If, as Rainwater and Yancey put it, there was "nothing really new" in the report, why did it stir such fury? How can such fury have lasted for ten long years? What taboo did Moynihan inadvertently violate? The mechanism he tripped is central, somehow, to our present way of life.

A closer look at this fall's revival of the Moynihan controversy may help to illuminate the issue. Prior to actual publication of Herbert Gutman's new book, whose theme is the stability and resiliency of black family life under slavery, the New York *Times* introduced the work to its readers with a long news story; then Roger Wilkins, a member of the *Times* editorial board, cited the book in an attack upon Moynihan the day after Moynihan defeated Bella Abzug in the New York senatorial primary; then Herbert Gutman was given space for a three-part essay on the argument of his book, to which Nathan Glazer was later asked to respond; and, finally, Herbert Hill, Labor Director of the NAACP, replied in a letter to Glazer. And there were many additional episodes —other biting letters like those of Hill, interviews with Percy Sutton and other black leaders, a long review of Gutman's book by Richard Sennett in the Sunday *Times Book Review*; and a bitter denunciation of Moynihan by Kenneth Clark, who in 1965 had defended Moynihan against his detracters in these words: "It's a kind of wolf pack operating in a very undignified way. If Pat is a racist, I am. He highlights the total pattern of segregation and discrimination. Is a doctor responsible for a disease simply because he diagnoses it?"

Herbert Hill's letter to the *Times* (October 12) announces the basic theme: Gutman's book "demolished the Moynihan thesis about the black family." Is this true? Gutman's book deals with the black family under slavery and until 1925. It does not deal with conditions in 1965, the date of Moynihan's "call for national action." The statistics Moynihan quoted for 1965 were correct then; similar indices today suggest, as Moynihan feared they might, a worsened condition. Concerning the black family under slavery—Gutman's chief subject—Moynihan had no original "thesis" of his own. Concerning the black family in urban environments today, he took the charitable explanation; *viz.*, that slavery and urban unemployment were to blame for the high rates of illegitimacy, female-headed households, and fatherless children.

Moynihan quoted government figures showing that about 23 per cent of non-white families in 1962 were headed by a woman. (The number of such white families in 1962 was about 7 per cent.) Gutman himself notes that at least one out of six black families, or about 17 per cent, were broken up by the sale of one partner or another by slaveholders. Thus, almost the same percentage of female-headed households which Moynihan found to constitute a crisis in the 1962 figures is held by Gutman to be proof of the stability of black families under slavery. It is clear both to Moynihan and to Gutman that not *all* black families, whether under slavery or under freedom, suffer the loss of the father from the home. But Gutman's concept of normality and social health for blacks—about 17 per cent forcibly separated families—is not at all normal or healthy for whites. A far lower rate of family abandonment by white fathers (below 10 per cent) is widely considered a catastrophic sign of family breakdown.

There are signs here of a double standard. Among whites, Herbert Hill gleefully wrote to the *Times*, recent rates of increase in female-headed families, in female family heads who are divorced or separated, and in the number of children in one-parent families, are higher than among blacks. He failed to state that the *actual proportion* of persons to whom all these disadvantages accrue is far higher among blacks than among whites. (He also failed to note that the proportion is far higher today than when Moynihan first spotted the trend in 1965.) Most scholars, policy planners, and ordinary citizens—black and white—see such developments among whites as a national disaster. Are they not also so for blacks?

Other points emerge from Gutman's researches: they do show a different attitude toward illegitimacy among unmarried black women than among whites, both during and after slavery. Secondly, they show that many of the stable marriages of blacks under slavery and from 1865-1925 were second marriages. This suggests that rates of separa-

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tion and divorce among blacks down the generations constitute a tradition divergent from white rates.

Both of these findings of Gutman tend to confirm the general earlier views of Frazier, Elkins, and others, even though they replace earlier surmises and impressions with much firmer statistical data, and even though they limit severely the extent of instability that earlier writers had suggested. Yet the generalization holds: blacks were victimized by slavery in such ways as to be forced to carry higher rates of female-headed families, illegitimacy, and divorce and separation than white families. It does seem that later, it was poverty and unemployment rather than, or more than, cultural tradition which caused urban victimization among blacks. It also seems that whites of equal poverty and equal unemployment show analogous (but not identical) rates of family instability.

This is a point which Moynihan himself made in comparing the urbanization of the early Irish immigrants to that of the blacks. "It was this abrupt transition that produced the wild Irish slums of the 19th-century Northeast. Drunkenness, crime, corruption, discrimination, family disorganization, juvenile delinquency were the routines of that era. In our own time, the same sudden transition has produced the Negro slum—different from, but hardly better than, its predecessors, and fundamentally the result of the same process." Moynihan cited Margaret Mead and Edward Wight Bakke to make plain that he was describing a universal, not just a particular, procession of causes. Still, that there is a strong case for "national action" to end such causes among blacks—that is, Moynihan's case —has not been disproved but only underlined by Gutman's book.

Throughout, Moynihan's emphasis was on empowering the needy family through economic underpinnings, on "enhancing the stability and resources of the Negro American family." He argued that a major governmental intervention was needed, and that intervention must have as its two indispensable foci both employment and a more equitable wage structure. On this ground nothing discovered by Gutman or by anybody else contradicts Moynihan's analysis. "One of the things we know," Gutman said in an interview on the publication of his book, "is that a powerful clue to the stability of a poor family is the regularity of employment." The Moynihan report recorded far more than a clue: "The conclusion from these and similar data is difficult to avoid: During times when jobs were reasonably plentiful, the Negro family became stronger and more stable. As jobs became more and more difficult to find, the stability of the family became more and more difficult to maintain." The connection between the curve of unemployment and that of family dissolution was perhaps the strongest and most original contribution of Moynihan's research.

His second strongest point was the new correlation between family instability and welfare dependency. And it is here, around the issue of dependency, that the hidden animus against Moynihan begins to become manifest. Gutman, who barely touches on the pages Moynihan wrote on urbanization, the wage system, and unemployment—no doubt because the emphasis Moynihan placed on these matters is similar to Gutman's own—quotes virtually every sentence in Moynihan (there are not very many) that describes deterioration, distortion, or damage in the black family. The idea apparently is that merely by describing the negative effects which, so he believed, slavery had induced in its victims, Moynihan somehow was blaming *them* for their present condition of dependency and instability.

Gutman's framing of the issue in this way is not new. During the controversy of 1965, Professor William Ryan had canonized the same idea in a bitter polemic against Moynihan, *Blaming the Victim*. And in this year's replay of the controversy in the *Times*, Herbert Hill's letter recapitulated the idea: In Moynihan (and in Glazer, too), Hill wrote, ". . . the black victim is made responsible for his condition, thereby exonerating racist practices and institutions."

No doubt, this is where Moynihan crossed the line of symbolic violation. He did not sufficiently "exonerate" blacks for their condition. For by focusing on the question of family structure, Moynihan implicitly allowed attention to fall on the behavior of blacks toward each other, not only on injustices in the system.

This is perhaps inevitable in any discussion of the family as a social unit: both the "system" and the individual come under question. It was perhaps equally inevitable that just this focusing on the family would make some blacks who read Moynihan feel uncomfortably threatened, not least when their own family experience had been a strong one. Roger Wilkins, in his article in the *Times,* wrote angrily that "black critics of the [Moynihan] report rejected it initially because it contradicted information gained from their own, their families', and their friends' experiences. . . ." Yet Wilkins's example of an admirable family experience—a mother having died, collateral relatives having stepped in "to raise the children on a railway porter's pay"—dramatizes precisely the point that a child growing up in a household with a mother and a father, whether or not they are his natural parents, is better off than a child growing up in a fatherless home (the kind Moynihan was talking about, and the kind which has been statistically salient within the black community). Moreover, the example also illustrates the additional economic burden placed upon collateral relatives of already stretched resources ("a railway porter's pay"). Where Moynihan saw the burden, Wilkins saw the glory; but the evidence Wilkins cites confirms Moynihan's analysis.

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Now, it is among the manifold ironies of this entire story that Moynihan himself, whatever the implications of his report, refrained from urging any program of self-help on blacks, asking instead for the federal government to do something about the problem. Some black leaders in recent months have not been so shy. Jesse Jackson, calling not long ago for a program to strengthen black families, also said that black Americans "must begin to accept a larger share of responsibility for their lives. For too many years we have been crying that racism and oppression have kept us down. That is true, and racism and oppression have to be fought on every front. But to fight any battle takes soldiers who are strong, healthy, spirited, committed, well-trained, and confident." Jackson has especially attacked the welfare dependency that "derives perhaps from slavery but that must now be overcome."

Another prominent black, the economist Thomas Sowell, argues forcefully in *Race and Economics* (1975) that "those methods that have historically proved successful—self-reliance, work skills, education, business experience—are all slow-developing, while those methods which are more direct and immediate—job quotas, charity subsidies, preferential treatment—tend to undermine self-reliance and pride of achievement in the long run. If the history of American ethnic groups shows anything, it is how large a role has been played by attitudes—and particularly attitudes of self-reliance."

THE actual situation of black families in 1975 followed the worst prognostications from trends Moynihan discerned in 1965. Some black leaders are willing to face these facts and to break old habits of thought. Just last year, Eleanor Holmes Norton told the Urban League in Atlanta that the percentage of black households headed by women had reached 35. (Government figures show that by the age of sixteen, two-thirds of all black children now spend some years without a father. In 1973, 46 per cent of all black children were born out of wedlock.) "The repair of the black condition in America disproportionately depends upon the succor of strong families," Mrs. Norton said.

Other black leaders, however, still feel comfortable with the language and symbols of dependency; and many white "friends" of blacks feel threatened when this dependency is even qualified. Blacks were once slaves, and in the unconscious thoughts of many they seem to be slaves still. By no means, therefore, must they be held responsible. One must always emphasize that they are victims and nothing but victims.

A striking similarity between the mentality of slaveholders of the past and some modes of thinking today lies precisely in this emphasis on total dependency. Gutman quotes a Louisiana cotton planter on how to train a slave: "What is essentially necessary for his happiness, you must provide for him Yourself and by that means create in him a habit of perfect dependence on you—Allow it once to be understood by a negro that he is able to provide for himself, and you that moment give him an undeniable claim on you for a portion of his time to make for this provision."

This mentality rests on a paradox. If you grant no responsibility or hope for their own advancement to blacks, but treat their needs as in every respect due to a form of victimization, then no one calls you a racist; you are regarded, instead, as a friend to blacks. "Don't blame the victim" is the slogan of such friendship. But if, on the other hand, you assert that blacks are equal to whites in potency, moral spirit, dignity, responsibility, and power over their own future, and deny that they are mere pawns and victims, then you set off a chorus of alarums and find yourself on treacherous emotional territory.

The corruptions to which this gives rise are evidenced in virtually every public statement about blacks and whites in our society. Untruth reigns. And the worst of this untruth is not located where some would look, in the ample folds and disguises of white racism. There is absolutely no hesitation among blacks or whites nowadays to diagnose and denounce the sins of white racism —conscious, unconscious, and as yet unperceived. But whereas to whites enormous moral responsibility is conceded, to blacks none is conceded. In a world in which to be treated as a sinner is to be treated as a free and responsible adult, whites are treated as sinners, blacks never.

Insofar as honest and direct truth is not the rule in racial discussions, insofar as an explicit mutual skepticism cannot be methodically employed, insofar as fact must always yield to euphemism, there is no equality in our social discourse. To speak the blunt truth is to enter into the only brotherhood that matters.

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# Koestler's Jewish Problem

*Edward Grossman*

THE Khazars were a pagan tribe of Turkic-Mongolian extraction inhabiting an area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, whose king and aristocracy, finding themselves pressed between the claims of Byzantium and the Caliphate, opted to convert to a third, or neutral, religion in 740 C.E., and that religion was Judaism. In the following two centuries, the Khazar kingdom achieved a certain military importance, its fighters helping to stave off the Viking-Rus advance from the north, and the Islamic thrust into Europe from the south. At the end of the 10th century, Khazaria was beaten by the Russians and its political identity was lost. Some of the Khazars may have stayed on in their territory for another two centuries, until they were absorbed or displaced by Asiatic hordes. It is generally agreed that beginning in the 10th century numbers of Khazars migrated in the direction of the Euphrates, Kiev, Hungary, and perhaps Poland, but how many, and how long the migration lasted, it is hard even to guess, since the Khazars left no records, and those from other sources are sketchy, to say the least.

In the first half of his new book, *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and Its Heritage*,* Arthur Koestler tells the story of the Khazars' rise and fall. His account is mostly unexceptionable, based on various, not always congruent, scholarly and amateur studies—the Khazar Question is a hoary one, which has attracted historians of repute and disrepute for almost a hundred years.† Koestler narrates in his well-known vigorous style, with just a few lapses into cuteness ("What was the motivation for this unique event?" he asks apropos of the Khazar conversion, and goes on: "It is not easy to get under the skin of a Khazar prince—covered, as it was, by a coat of mail."). In the second half of the book Koestler considers the Khazars' "heritage" after their dispersion. He believes he has proof that they, and not German Jews as usually thought, provided the bulk of Jewish immigration into Poland after the 13th century, and that therefore Ashkenazi Jews—the majority of Jews today—have their genetic starting-point among the tribesmen of the Caucasus rather than the Hebrews of Canaan. This being so, the logical result for Koestler is that anti-Semitism, the attachment of Jews in the Diaspora to each other and to the state of Israel, and what Koestler calls "the Jewish dogma of the Chosen Race," are all "meaningless" or "illusory."

The type of evidence that Koestler offers in favor of his contention that Polish Jewry was mainly formed from Khazar immigrants—an idea that is far from being new—ranges from circumstantial to suggestive. At about the same time that the Khazars were disappearing from their homeland, he says, there were the first signs of a large-scale Jewish presence in Poland. These Jews could not have originated in Germany, because the Crusades, and later the pogroms occasioned by the Black Death, virtually exterminated the German Jews, who in any case preferred martyrdom to emigration. "We may safely conclude," Koestler says, "that the traditional idea of a mass-exodus of Western Jewry from the Rhineland to Poland . . . is historically untenable . . . a legend." Koestler directs attention to some Polish place names that have a Khazarian ring to them. As for Yiddish, the language of the Polish Jews, which would seem to be a formidable piece of evidence that they did come from the West, Koestler argues that its origin was not Rhenish-German, but rather that the jargon was created by the Khazars through dealings with ethnic German merchants from Eastern Germany in the areas bordering the Slavonic belt of Europe. To back up this view, Koestler quotes from the work of the Yiddish linguist Mathias Mieses and the Israeli historian Abraham N. Poliak.

How good is Koestler's evidence? Mieses, who stressed the Slavic roots of Yiddish, was a respected scholar. On the other hand, Max Weinreich (whose *Geshikhte Fun der Yidisher Shprakh*, "History of the Yiddish Language" [1973], does not appear in Koestler's bibliography) traced early Yiddish to Germanic city dialects, with the Slavic element added later. As for Polish place names, they do not really seem to advance the Khazar cause. Bernard D. Weinryb, whose books *The Jews of Poland* (1973) and *The Beginnings of East European Jewry in Legend and Historiography* (1962) are basic works in the field (neither of them is quoted

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† A large part of the literature on the Khazars has been produced under Soviet auspices and is suspect; in Czarist times, too, there were some strange treatments—such as Abraham Firkowich's attempt to link the Khazars to the Karaites, a Jewish sect. Firkowich was one of the foremost forgers of the 19th century. For a scholarly work analyzing some previously neglected material from the Cairo Genizah, see *Documents of the History of the Khazars*, by Omsyljan Pritsak and Norman Golb, to be published soon by the University of California Press.



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from by Koestler or cited in his bibliography), writes:

> The efforts by some historians and writers to find in certain Polish toponyms . . . some indication of former Khazar or Jewish Khazar settlements were in vain. It has been proven that these names have nothing to do with Khazars or Khazar tribes. They all have other meanings in Polish.

PASSING to Koestler's main "evidence," it is obvious that the question of Jewish population in various lands in medieval times is crucial. The whole subject of pre-modern Jewish demographics has recently begun to be studied systematically. As Salo Baron has noted, figuring Jewish populations in pre-modern times is risky, for censuses were usually rigged by governments to increase tax revenue. In addition, of other records that came down to our times, many were lost in the Holocaust. Koestler himself states, concerning both the Khazars and the Polish Jews, "regarding the numbers involved, we have no reliable information." Nevertheless, historians such as Baron and Weinryb have painstakingly drawn a demographic picture with what materials are available, and their findings do not lend support to Koestler.

To begin with the German Jews, Baron (in his *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*) warns that their tribulations during the Crusades should not be telescoped, lest the student get the impression that there was nothing but massacre for two or three centuries. Although "guestimates" at exact population figures must be "unfortunately quite arbitrary," for Baron the weight of several kinds of evidence inclines him to think that actually, during this period, "European Jewish communities constantly increased in numerical, economic, and cultural strength." Massacres did not happen in every center, and "certainly, by 1200 many more Jews lived under Christendom than had in 1095." Thus there would have been enough Jews in the West to begin populating Poland once the expulsions from Germany and Bohemia started after the Crusades.

Their numbers need not be exaggerated. To be sure, Baron, like Dubnow before him, speaks of a "tremendous influx of Western Jews" into Poland after 1503, a date at which the Jews already in Poland probably didn't exceed 30,000. By 1648, there may have been 450,000 Polish Jews, an increase Baron calls "not surprising," taking into account continuing immigration from the West, Polish economic expansion, and the high Jewish birth rate combined with early marriage and rudimentary but effective public health care. Nor does Weinryb, who arrives at much lower figures, doubt the ability of this small population to grow into a Jewish community that was counted at half a million in 1764, in the first halfway reliable census in Poland. Through exhaustive analysis of poll-tax and burial-society records, Weinryb comes to a figure of only 12,000 Polish Jews in 1500, and 170,000 in 1648. Even this represented something of a population explosion. The principal factors, Weinryb believes, were natural increase and continuing immigration from the West. Indeed, writes Weinryb, although "nothing approaching a mass settlement [of Jews in Poland] can be observed until the 15th century," contemporary commercial charters, location of settlements, and liturgical traditions all strongly suggest that the tiny community in the year 1500 was mostly from the West:

> Information, though fragmentary, indicates that the bulk of Polish Jewry was of German-Bohemian origin in the 13th and 14th century, when Jewish settlement in Poland was founded, although a few individuals may have come from Italy or from the Genoese colony in Kaffa (Theodosia) on the Black Sea coast.

Some historians are less explicit than Weinryb about the origin of that small number of very early Jews in Poland; they do not rule out the possibility that some of them were Khazars. Baron, for instance: "Before and after the Mongol upheaval [12th through 14th century] the Khazars sent many offshoots into the unsubdued Slavonic lands, helping ultimately to build up the great Jewish centers of Eastern Europe." Koestler quotes Baron here, and also Baron's remark that Khazaria, "this noteworthy experiment in Jewish statecraft, doubtless exerted a greater influence on Jewish history than we are as yet able to envisage." Koestler fails to consult Baron on later developments, however. If some of the 30,000 Jews in Poland in 1503 had Khazar antecedents, Baron says that the newcomers from Germany imposed their own rituals, customs, and speech on the locals "because of their superiority in numbers." Cecil Roth, too, in his *History of the Jews*, says with suitable vagueness that the dispersed "remnant" of the Khazars "continued, as it seems, to give additional strength to Jewish life in Eastern Europe."

The point here is to try not to play a numbers game in ignorance or defiance of available historical data, or, when evidence is lacking, to concoct it. This much, anyway, has been clear even to most of the partisans of the not-so-new Khazar theory, which emphasizes the presence of Khazars in Poland in the very early days of Jewish settlement, a period described by Baron as "misty." For example, one such partisan, the modern Polish historian, Adam Vetulani, is quoted by Koestler as follows:

> Scholars agree that these oldest settlements [in Poland] were founded by Jewish emigrés from the Khazar state and Russia, while the Jews from Southern and Western Europe began to arrive and settle only later . . . and that a certain proportion at least of the Jewish population originated from the Khazar country.*

All in all, Koestler is not too far wrong when he writes in an opening chapter of *The Thirteenth Tribe*:

> Historians agree that immigration from Khazaria must have contributed to the growth of Po-

* Vetulani adds, and Koestler doesn't quote this, "The increase in the Jewish population from the 13th century on was probably connected with the increasing immigration waves of Western Jews."

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lish Jewry. . . . But they feel less certain about the *extent* of this contribution—the size of the Khazar immigration compared with the influx of Western Jews, and their respective share in the genetic make-up of the modern Jewish community.

Obviously this is a legitimate problem for research and dispute, which no one could wish to be approached with anything other than passionate concern. The trouble with Koestler is not that he is not a professional historian. It is that he has an extra-scholarly axe to grind; by the logic of his peculiar argument he is obliged to find that the Khazars provided the "bulk" of Jewish immigration into Poland early and late, come what may. But in order for the Khazar Theory in its extreme reductive form, as Koestler preaches it, to begin to be credible, one would have to have hard evidence that the German Jews could not have migrated in sufficient numbers into Poland in the 16th century, and that the Khazars, presumably moving in from the other direction, were still Jews at that very late date in their history. On the first point, Koestler's ideas are unsubstantiated and fly in the face of authoritative opinion.

As for the extent and permanence of the Khazar conversion, although Koestler quickly gets into the habit of using "Khazar" and "Jew" interchangeably, there is really much uncertainty among historians as to how many Khazars became Jews and stayed Jews. No writer except Koestler—including the outstanding advocate of the Khazar Theory, Poliak—proposes that the conversion was universal. Most limit its penetration to the upper crust of the pluralistic Khazar society. For example, Dubnow (*World History of the Jewish People*): "All the members of the government and the nobility observed the Mosaic faith, but the middle and lower classes adhered to Islam, Christianity, or paganism." Weinryb is very severe and says the Khazar Theory is just one of a bunch of theories on the origin of Polish Jewry that "are no more than myths or speculations or wild guesses based on some vague or misunderstood references"; but he does accept the historicity of the conversion, saying: "The elite members of Khazar society, led by their king and his entourage, embraced Judaism; the rest of the Khazars, however, remained idolators or were converted eventually to Islam or Christianity." Baron speaks of the conversion of "the royal house and large sections of the population," which still left the Jews a minority in Khazaria until the influx of "real" Jews seeking refuge from Byzantine mistreatment. D.M. Dunlop, author of *The History of the Jewish Khazars* (1954), who is described by Koestler as one of the "foremost . . . authors whose writings are of central importance to the [Khazar] problem," notes that "while the religion of the ruling class was Judaism . . . other religions were extensively practiced." So unanimous are historians on this matter that Koestler could not help quoting one of them, J.B. Bury, in *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire* (1912):" [The converting king] allowed the mass of his people to abide in their heathendom and worship their idols." But this does not sink in, and Koestler continues throughout to assume that all the Khazars converted for good, their entire gene pool being appropriated by the Jewish people.

Koestler's methods make it impossible to perceive *The Thirteenth Tribe* as a scholarly work, and one casts around for another genre to which it might be assigned. If there were any doubts, they are dispelled on reading the following lines in Dunlop, which Koestler missed, although elsewhere he quotes Dunlop's study copiously and defers to his authority:

> The theory that the modern Jews of Eastern Europe, or more particularly those in Poland, are the descendants of the medieval Khazars . . . can be dealt with very shortly, because there is little evidence which bears directly upon it, and it unavoidably retains the character of a mere assumption. . . . To speak of the Jews of Eastern Europe as descendants of the Khazars seems to involve Ashkenazim in general . . . and would be to go much beyond what our imperfect records allow.

## II

Call it pseudo-scholarship, historical novel, polemic, the question remains why Koestler wrote *The Thirteenth Tribe*. Was it to entertain, scandalize? To challenge authoritative, therefore conventional, wisdom? The answer would seem to be no, that it actually comes as the latest skirmish in a battle he began fighting when he matriculated at college more than fifty years ago. In his admirably honest autobiography, *Arrow in the Blue* (1952), Koestler recalls how he arrived in Vienna in 1922 at the age of seventeen and was recruited to a Zionist dueling and drinking society. Up to that time he had never heard of Zionism, indeed had had nothing to do with things Jewish: "I was brought up in an assimilated environment without roots in Judaic tradition." He joined, he declares, rather mindlessly, out of a desire for comradeship and glamor, which the other clubs, anti-Semitic, did not offer him. It was at college that he first learned something of Judaism, and met observant, Yiddish-speaking Jews from Poland. "Judaism did not attract me," he remembers. "I was only aware of my revulsion against a form of worship which seemed to consist in cheating the Lord and one's own conscience." This formula about Judaism being a cheat is a favorite with Koestler. In *Promise and Fulfillment* (1949)—his account of the British Mandate in Palestine and the creation of Israel—he speaks of the religious Jews with their ingenuity in "cheating the Lord and their own consciences." As a collegian, his antipathy was also excited by non-religious, Yiddish-speaking Jews, because Yiddish "had no fixed grammar and syntax. . . . I disliked this language, and the mentality which it reflected, from the first time I heard it, and I have never lost my aversion for it."

The sense of a very physical distress, incompletely mediated by rationalization, rises palpably from Koestler's recollections of early encounters with Jews different from himself. Indeed, his response has not seemed to change much over the years. From everything that he has ever written about them, it

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appears that observant and/or Yiddish-speaking Jews arouse a nausea in Koestler that he has not had the desire or ability to get over or understand insightfully. The reader is reminded of the classic feelings of anti-Semites, and some of the cruder, less reflective Zionists. In fact, Koestler did not content himself with dueling and drinking in sweet Vienna, as most of his comrades did, but quit school in a fit of romanticism and moral indignation, to go up to Palestine. Again, writing many years later, a wiser head, he remembers that he believed when he set out for *Eretz Yisrael* that the deformations he had observed among other Jews were a result of ghetto life and the lack of a territory, and that "When the Jewish state was reestablished, the cure would be automatic and all would be well." That was rather naive, he implies, yet it seems to be precisely the stiff-necked failure of the Jews to be so simply "cured" that has vexed him so since May 15, 1948.

KOESTLER has let it be known repeatedly that since that day, when the Jews got a territory and Koestler's moral duty to them was paid off once and for all, everyone in the world who calls himself a Jew has had a choice: either emigrate to Israel straightaway, or cease being a Jew and imposing the burden of Jewishness on "helpless children." On this score Koestler has outdone Ben-Gurion, who only insisted that all Zionists move to Israel. For his part, Koestler chose to become a "European with British citizenship." Asked by an interviewer in 1955 whether he still considered himself a Jew, Koestler answered curiously, "Insofar as race is concerned, I have no idea and take no interest in the question how many Hebrews, Babylonians, Roman legionnaires, Christian crusaders, and Hungarian nomads were among my ancestors." Nevertheless, although declaring his role finished and ceremoniously cutting himself off from the Jews as a group, he has kept coming back to the subject of Jews, Judaism, Israel, the Diaspora, anti-Semitism, "race," always repeating the same ideas. In an essay published in 1954, entitled "Judah at the Crossroads—An Exhortation," he noticed with displeasure that, even in liberal and democratic societies, Jews were still fostering special ties among themselves instead of disappearing into the non-Jewish majority, maintaining a separate identity even when not observant of religious ritual, and this because they were still in thrall to an "inert tradition voided of all spiritual content which, to quote Arnold Toynbee, is merely 'the fossilized remnant of a once independent culture.' "

Actually, there is no such thing as Jewish culture, Koestler announced, only a "Mosaic religion" or "Jewish faith," that was also on its last legs. One of the reasons for this was that everything worthwhile in the Ten Commandments and the Prophets had long ago been taken over by a mysterious conglomerate, "our Heleno-Judeo-Christian tradition"; the other reason for Judaism's "dying out" was the advent of the state of Israel: "If the mystic yearning for the return to Palestine is eliminated from the Jewish faith," as it logically must be now that return is possible, Koestler explained, "then the very foundations and essence of that faith will have gone. . . . In fact the major part of Judaism's prayers, rites, and symbols have become meaningless since the restoration of the Jewish state."

In the same essay, Koestler was moved to deal with "racial" matters, again with the effect of denying the community of Jews and predicting or urging its demise. "Take away the 'Chosen Race' idea," he wrote,

> the genealogical claim of descent from one of the twelve tribes, the focal interest in Palestine as the *locus* of a glorious past, and the memories of national history perpetuated in the religious festivals . . . and all that remained would be a set of archaic dietary prescriptions and tribal laws.

As for the non-observant:

> The only alternative to the perpetuation of Jewish separateness for that nondescript majority who have outgrown Jewish nationalism and the Jewish religion is to renounce both, and to allow themselves to be socially and culturally absorbed by their environment.

Predictably, Koestler's words angered and hurt many British Jews, which Koestler, always a controversial writer up to a certain point, did not seem to mind. A rather restrained answer was given by Isaiah Berlin:

> To demand social and ideological homogeneity, to wish to get rid of minorities because they are tiresome . . . is illiberal and coercive and neither rational nor humane. This is the position that, in very different forms, I attribute to Plato, to T.S. Eliot, and to Arthur Koestler: it forms the heart of the "integralist" nationalism in Europe in the last century and a half, and now almost everywhere, which tells men to assimilate to the prevailing laws and customs; or else get out, or, at best, acquiesce in the treatment accorded to not very desirable outsiders, what Charles Maurras and his followers used to call *métèques*. The notion that differences should not (or cannot) be tolerated, and should therefore be ironed out, and so obliterated, is what, in my view, distinguishes barbarian from civilized societies.

Berlin did not inquire wha right Koestler—with his skimp knowledge and heavy overlay o emotion—had to lecture on th meaning or meaninglessness of Jud aism. In the subsequent controvers Koestler replied:

> If my saying that we [*sic*] must decide whether we belong to the Chosen Race or to the nation whose citizen we are, if the revolutionary discovery that we can't eat our cake and have it, are figments of a totalitarian mind, then I must confess to a totalitarian mind.

Once more, in an essay last yea entitled "The Vital Choice" anc published at the same time that *Th Thirteenth Tribe* was being writ ten, Koestler returned to his famil iar themes, repeating the formula tions of twenty years before, ofter word for word. Obviously, his idea about Jews, Judaism, etc. are inti mately tied up with and precede hi consideration of the Khazars, fo according to his logic, if most Jew

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descend from the Khazars, this is a "proof," a historical vindication, of Koestler's lifelong notions and complaints. Once *The Thirteenth Tribe* is placed in context, it begins to make sense as the work of a writer in the grip of an obsession. The Khazar Theory is new for Koestler, but it is just the windup; the pitch at the end is Koestler's old pitch to the Jews. This time, thanks to the Khazars, it is supposed to be irresistible.

For a reader who comes to *The Thirteenth Tribe* without knowledge of Koestler's previous writings, the ulterior motive may not start to loom until late in the book, when Koestler considers "Race and Myth." Due to interbreeding and conversions over the millennia, Koestler says, Jews are more similar genetically to the people of their host nations than to Jews in other countries; therefore there is no such thing as a Jewish "race," let alone a "Chosen Race." The Khazar conversion is the prime reason for this: "The evidence from anthropology concurs with history in refuting the popular belief in a Jewish race descended from the biblical tribe."

Koestler, a Middle European whose pre-war German education has affected his thinking and expression all the while that he has consciously tried to reject its quirks and misconceptions, has always used the word "race" loosely, so that it was impossible to know whether it was meant as a figure of speech or a scientific term. In his autobiography he says, "Most bewildering of all was the discovery that the saga of the 'Chosen Race' seemed to be taken quite literally by traditionalist Jews." But in his book on the birth of Israel, Koestler wrote without putting that word in inverted commas, "The mandatory power was caught between two antagonistic races," and, "Israel today is a race in transition."

The term "Chosen Race," which Koestler in *The Thirteenth Tribe* treats pejoratively, as a scientific non-starter, and wrongly attributes to religious and other Jews, is a usage that is strictly confined to anti-Semites, a corruption of the passage in Jewish liturgy, *"Atah v'chartanu mikol ha'amim"*—"chosen us from among all the peoples" (to receive the Law). The 20th century is full of attempts to put a simplistic racist construction on that complex, essentially theological ideal, with the aim of preparing to bait, persecute, and kill the Jews. A recent attempt was the UN's Zionism-equal-racism resolution, which renders any book such as Koestler's on the Khazars and their "heritage" less dusty and more topical.

Because of the crimes committed in its name, genetic anthropology has a stench coming off it. Yet to practice it probably should not be taboo, for like any description of nature its moral charge is neutral until its findings are somehow applied or abused. First of all, a lot depends on the sensibility and scrupulousness of the scientist or writer, especially the popularizer. A recent book that measures up to high standards is *The Myth of the Jewish Race* by Raphael Patai. It is interesting to compare the treatment given by Koestler and Patai to several topics that they both touch on.

Patai shows how, during three thousand years of their history—in Palestine and in the Diaspora—the Jews have "continually received an inflow of genes from neighboring populations as a result of proselytism, intermarriage, rape, the birth of illegitimate children fathered by Gentiles, and so on." The Khazar conversion is dramatic, but it is not unique—among the so-called Sephardim, Yemenite Jewry had a largely non-Hebrew ancestry, and "on the basis of admittedly scanty historical data, most scholars have formed the opinion that *most* of the Jews of North Africa are of Berber origin" [Patai's emphasis]. As for the fate of the Khazar Jews, Patai reports that "Some historians and anthropologists go so far as to consider the modern Jews of East Europe, and more particularly of Poland, the descendants of the medieval Khazars"; he neither accepts nor rejects this, for lack of data. As a consequence of these hundred generations of intercourse with the Gentiles, Jews today display a genetic "picture"—composed of morphological traits, blood-group genes, and red blood cell and serum proteins—consistent with the history of "a group of people who originated in the Mediterranean region and subsequently have diversified greatly in their genetic make-up."

So far, Patai is in agreement with Koestler. But Patai also says that genetic information shows "that most Jews have at least one distant ancestor of Mediterranean stock," disproving the strenuous claim, so important to Koestler, that there is nothing physical linking a Polish Jew to a Jew in England or Iraq, or the three of them to the sliver of territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. The best evidence for the partially Mediterranean or Semitic ancestry of most Jews comes from the elegant research of several Israeli scientists (published in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*, uncited by or unknown to Koestler) on the fingerprint patterns of eight diverse Jewish populations, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, from Germany to Iraq. As Patai notes: "Fingerprint patterns are believed to be very resistant to environmental change, and may therefore reveal remnants of a common gene pool in a population which has subsequently undergone much change in other characteristics." In fact, this is what the Israeli study revealed: "Fingerprint patterns were found to be similar among all Jewish groups analyzed and were suggestive of a Mediterranean origin."

Does this mean that the Jews constitute a "race," scientifically speaking, or a "Chosen Race," inheriting superiority and a license to lord it over others? Only a fool or a psychopath could believe it or propagate it; furthermore, there is no good reason to think that such a belief is "dogma" among "traditionalist Jews," as Koestler declares it to be. Separation, even a sense of election, are not equivalent to racism, and a feeling of physical connection to the Patriarchs is not the same as belief in some fantastic purity. As Chaim Raphael says:

> The Jews have always known that *physically* they are a mixed people: if faith and kinship are vivid and satisfying, it is not (even for

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the Orthodox, who are fully aware of biblical and later intermarriage and conversions) dependent on the link with Father Abraham but on the acceptance and enjoyment of values felt to be authentic in their own right.

The fact that Judaism is open to converts should prove that the notion of chosenness is not construed racially or genetically, especially by the Orthodox. Maybe this distinction between particularity and superiority is too fine; maybe the temptation to misunderstand is too compelling. At any rate, there is still, after all that has happened, no end in sight of the writers and others who are ready to accuse religious Jews or Jews generally of originating and perpetuating the very myth-patterns that, in the hands of anti-Semites, have been used to set the stage for genocide. The fact that racism is now in bad odor has not changed things basically, only given them a new twist—see the UN resolution.

Patai, in contrast to Koestler, attributes no racist belief to observant, Zionist, or any other group of Jews. Yet his book, objective and sensible as such books go, also evidently has an extra-scientific motive, which is to discredit, among those who are not already confirmed anti-Semites, the stubborn libel that the Jews are a race apart. Perhaps the best refutation is the most graphic—Patai's section of photographs of El Al employees, their faces ranging from the typically Norwegian to the typically Persian. In fact, of course, one need do no more than take a walk along any main street in Israel to realize again that the Jews are a salad of genes and that Zionism is racially promiscuous.

So far as Koestler too broadcasts these facts, he is doing a service in his lively way. He has especially good sport at the expense of the anti-Semites of his native Hungary, a region where the settlement of Khazar Jews is much better documented than for Poland. The Magyars "received—metaphorically and perhaps literally—a blood transfusion from the Khazars," Koestler writes. But to embarrass anti-Semites is far from being Koestler's only purpose, or even his main one. He goes on to say that if the Jews are mainly Khazar and not Semitic,

> then the term "anti-Semitism" would become void of meaning, based on a misapprehension shared by both the killers and their victims. The story of the Khazar Empire, as it slowly emerges from the past, begins to look like the most cruel hoax which history has ever perpetrated.

It is a token of Koestler's old-fashioned assumptions that he thinks a "scientific" proof of the absurdity of anti-Semitic doctrine would make anti-Semites mend their ways. Presumably, if Jews carry mostly Khazar, not Semitic genes, they do not bear the curse of deicide and therefore should be left alone. The assumption here is that anti-Semitism is rational in nature, so that if it can be shown to have been misinformed, it will be rendered "meaningless." However, the opposite is the case: to show an anti-Semite that the Jews have mixed with other peoples merely whets his prurient interest.

The most important consequence for Koestler of this canard of the Jews' mainly Khazar background is that he really seems to believe that, if true, or if thought true, it must deprive Jews of their last logically defensible reason for sticking together, or even remaining Jews, in the Diaspora and perhaps in Israel too (in 1949, Koestler predicted, "One thing seems fairly certain: *Within a generation or two Israel will have become an entirely 'un-Jewish' country*" [his emphasis]).* So the Khazars come as the clincher to Koestler's long argument with his fellow Jews—now they must see the light.

One recalls that, before he came to Zionism, Theodor Herzl had the brainstorm of personally leading the Jews of Vienna to St. Stephen's Cathedral to be converted en masse, solving their Jewish problem and his own. Koestler, who lived opposite the Cathedral as a boy and whose outlook was shaped by much the same really defunct environment as Herzl's, appears to cherish a similar solution, on a worldwide scale. His discovery of the Khazars has given him the chance to fulfill his ambition by reasoning with the Jews more, and fulminating against them less.

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* Koestler is at pains to insist that his version of the Khazar Theory should have no harmful repercussions for Israel. In an appendix, "Some Implications—Israel and the Diaspora," he admits that there is a "danger" his book "may be maliciously misinterpreted as a denial of the state of Israel's right to exist." But that right "is not based on the hypothetical origins of the Jewish people . . . it is based on international law—i.e., on the United Nations decision in 1947 to partition Palestine." Whatever the genetic makeup of the Israelis, Koestler declares that it is the "moral obligation of any civilized person, Gentile or Jew, to defend" the Israelis' right to their own state. Perhaps Koestler is alluding to such "misinterpretations" as those of Jamil Baroody, Saudi Arabia's permanent UN representative, who was airing the "facts" about the Khazars at the UN even before the publication of *The Thirteenth Tribe*. The Zionists are not Jews at all, Baroody told his listeners, they are Khazars; therefore Israel, the so-called Jewish state, has no right to be. No doubt his audience dozed through his presentation; but Koestler, because of *Darkness at Noon*, commands more respect and attention. It is debatable whether, in the form that he puts it, and considering the conclusions he draws, the Khazar Theory does not invite misinterpretations damaging to Israel and to Israeli relations with Jews and Gentiles, clouding the climate of popular non-thought. For example, a press release from the American publisher of *The Thirteenth Tribe* erroneously trumpets Koestler's "startling thesis" that "virtually all Western Jews except the Sephardim aren't really Jewish at all." The New York *Times* reviewer made the same mistake. It is also questionable whether the birthright of Israel as Koestler pinpoints it is not too precarious—what the UN has given, the UN can take away. The symbol of Israel is the menorah, which is not a Khazar symbol, and for all the continuing and necessary discussion over what that symbolism means and how well it is living up to its name, Israel is seen by Israelis and Jews, and its Gentile friends and enemies, as the Jewish state. Thus the question of the Jews' "blood" ties to the Maccabees and Isaiah, to Abraham and the others, is not all-important, but it is not irrelevant, either. The Bible that is read by Christians and Muslims, agnostics and Marxists, says that God promised the Land to Jacob's "seed." If people really were to think that such a connection was fictitious, then the Exile from and Return to *Eretz Yisrael*—not Khazaria, not Uganda (once proposed as a possible Jewish homeland)—would become mere metaphors—obscurantist and pernicious metaphors, in Koestler's eyes—and Israel, possibly being rid of some international anti-Semitic opposition, would forfeit even more of its support.

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# Ophuls: Justice Misremembered

*Dorothy Rabinowitz*

TOWARD the end of *The Memory of Justice*—the new four-and-a-ıalf-hour long documentary film ›y Marcel Ophuls which, using old ıewsreels and film clips intercut vith interviews in the present, ttempts to cast light on the nature f war crimes in our time—there ›ccurs one of those moments, small n themselves, that invite dispro-›ortionately large reflections on the ntire enterprise of which they are part.

The scene takes place in a sauna ı Germany. In the course of it the iewer is vouchsafed a visit with ›me of Hamburg's citizens, young-›h to middle-aged men and women ho loll about together in the :eam while they outline the merits f the mixed sauna for the benefit f Ophuls and his crew. Here in ıe steam room, one thirtyish aked German man of ample girth arnestly explains, everyone is qual: Jew and Gentile, the man ho owns a Porsche and the one ho drives a Volkswagen. Perhaps ecause—given this testimony to ıe breakdown of social barriers—othing seems unnatural in the ıixed sauna, the talk turns easily nough to what happened to the ews so long ago in that other Ger-ıany. The thirtyish German looks ›mber as he reflects on the mass ıurders; another, lanky and dark, bserves that the schools do not :ach enough about this period. )thers turn their faces up to catch ıe conversation or shift sauna-athing positions; and not a few f these are pretty girls, as the ımera shows, playing over the ack of nubile bodies stretched the :ngth of the sauna floor. Mean-hile, in the course of his observations about the Jewish fate, the thirtyish German bites back the word "gassed." Shortly thereafter the camera follows one of the nude girls to the shower stall, where it lingers on the overhead pipes sufficiently long for the veriest blockhead to make the connection between this and the shower heads of Auschwitz.

By this time it does not occur to the viewer to ask by what inexorable logic we find ourselves in a German sauna where such comparisons lie ready and waiting. The random hunt for the provocative, evident in so much Ophuls presents in the foregoing four-and-a-half hours, has by now earned a kind of acceptance as an elemental part of the film.

It is not, however, for its random nature that this film is significant. *The Memory of Justice* opens with the familiar footage of the Nuremberg proceedings, the spectacle of Goering, Speer, Hess, and the rest of the Nazi hierarchy in the prisoners' box, earphones on as they listen to the recital of atrocities perpetrated under National Socialism. Immediately afterward there flash in quick succession previews of the themes Ophuls will touch on: Yehudi Menuhin, in the course of an interview in Berlin in 1973, a presence at once steely and languid, enunciating his belief that every human is guilty; a former French soldier narrating the story of atrocities perpetrated by his country's military during the Algerian war; Colonel Anthony Herbert, who bore witness to the massacre of Vietnamese civilians and the subsequent cover-up of the crime.

This essentially is the range of Ophuls's concerns in the film, then: Nuremberg, Algeria, My Lai, all thrashed about by a cast that includes Telford Taylor, Daniel Ellsberg, Ophuls's wife (a former member of the Hitler Youth), a French Communist Senator and survivor of Auschwitz, the clients of a sauna, Admiral Karl Doenitz, students in Ophuls's Princeton film seminar, the Rt. Hon. Lord Hartley Shawcross, convicted Nazi medical researcher Dr. Gerhard Rose, and Joan Baez, among others.

It is striking that a mere listing of the principals—these are by no means all of them—carries with it a faint but unmistakable suggestion of comedy. And indeed, there are moments in the film when, abandoning a hopeless quest for the provocative (as Ophuls must sometimes do when the passing German housewife or stroller in Schleswig-Holstein he catches with his cameras simply has nothing remotely significant to say), he engages in a kind of aimless, genial spoofing instead. Regularly, the film turns to these excursions into "humanness," Ophuls's substitute whenever encounters with his subjects fail to yield substantive drama.

In a typical extended scene of this sort, Ophuls goes off in search of a woman doctor who had been sentenced to imprisonment by the Nuremberg tribunal for murdering concentration-camp prisoners and who now lives quietly in Schleswig-Holstein. Along the way he gets run off a hostile farmer's land and asks questions of passersby who have heard of the doctor but have very little else to offer about her by way of comment. One man, having told the little he knows, senses the noose of small talk tightening. Impatient with Ophuls's gregariousness, he walks away, indicating, not without some justice on his side, that a person need not indefinitely be detained by conversations to which he has nothing whatever to contribute. At journey's end, Ophuls's encounter with his subject consists of a view of the doctor's house, from the outside, while from within one hears a brief cordial exchange in which Ophuls's request for an interview is denied. Thus we have been brought hither and yon to view the outside of a house and overhear Ophuls being refused an interview.

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This rambling, or "discursiveness" as it is called in the torrent of critical enthusiasm with which *The Memory of Justice* has been received, is not without its significance. That is, there is a reason for this meandering, this quest for paradox, not to say the necessity to manufacture drama, and that reason can best be illuminated by noting the difference between this latest Ophuls documentary and his earlier film about collaboration and resistance during the Nazi occupation of France, *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

One need only recall for a moment the nature and quality of the participants in *The Sorrow and the Pity*—the resistance members of Clermont-Ferrand, the collaborators, the British agents, the remarkable farmer-heroes, the Graves brothers—to know how much that film's power was derived from the rendering of direct experience, and the degree to which the hard, substantive nature of that experience contributed to the coherence of vision. There is but one echo of this coherence in *The Memory of Justice*, and that is in the character of the French Communist Senator, Marie Claude Vaillant-Couturier, survivor of Auschwitz whose sole function in the film is to bear witness. Nor is it surprising that Mme. Vaillant is by far the most compelling and attractive figure of the lot available in *The Memory of Justice*. One thinks of all the Vaillants in *The Sorrow and the Pity*, those vessels of experience that give the film its clarity of moral vision, even in—particularly in—its disquisitions on the nature of justice, a subject with which *The Sorrow and the Pity* is concerned quite as much as is *The Memory of Justice*.

THE difference between the earlier film and Ophuls's latest is that the first relies on history for its shape and coherence, while the latter attempts to impose on history a welter of theory and ideology, much of it hostile to the facts of that history into the bargain. It is no accident that in *The Memory of Justice* one hears again and again the distinct overtones of satisfaction in the answers to certain of Ophuls's inquiries about America's fallen moral estate, and no accident either that those inquiries are made regularly. One hears the former Nuremberg prosecutor Telford Taylor grapple with the question: After My Lai, after the Vietnam war, has the sense of his country as one that had the moral right to try the Germans at Nuremberg not had to be altered? Perhaps; not much; it is hard to say; yes, some changes in his thinking, Taylor manages to say, conceding and trying not to concede, twisting under the relentless weight, not so much of arguments about Vietnam as of contemporary political experience whose influences it would take a man of sterner stuff than Taylor to have withstood. Not that Taylor lacks stern stuff altogether. He lacks, rather, the admirable contempt felt by his fellow former prosecutor at Nuremberg, the Rt. Honorable Lord Hartley Shawcross, for those influences which have made it possible in our time to compare Nazi Germany's planned program of genocide with the American intervention in Vietnam. The tonic moments in the new Ophuls film are few, but certainly one of them is the rejoinder provided by Shawcross to its extended hand-wringing and recriminations about the bombing of Dresden. Those who wage aggressive war must contemplate the possibility that they will be beaten, Shawcross observes in his unyielding, deliberate style: Dresden was the inevitable consequence of Poland, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Coventry.

But the Shawcrosses are few in the new Ophuls film, whose underlying vision and sentiment are weighted far more heavily in the direction of such as Daniel Ellsberg than of the prosecutors of Nuremberg, despite Ophuls's much publicized assertion that his film was meant, in the end, to be an endorsement of Nuremberg. There is a side of Ophuls that intrudes on all his better intentions in this film, a side best and briefly described as an impulse toward anti-Americanism. He intended to make a movie that took up the admittedly complicated question of whether the victors in a war may in good conscience judge the vanquished. He fought a hard battle to rescue his film from editing that would have leaned too heavily on Vietnam footage and thus made too much of a parallel between the Nazis in Europe and the Americans in Vietnam. Still, having rescued his own film, it is now what *he* has made it. Ophuls intended a movie exploring the question of whether the victor ought to judge the vanquished and ended up making a movie that is a judgment on the victors. He intended to make a film that would in the end stand as an endorsement of the Nuremberg trials and ended with one that denies the legitimacy of Nuremberg at every turn, with every facile cut to Vietnam.

Among the less tonic moments in *The Memory of Justice* is the spectacle of Daniel Ellsberg relating with ill-concealed satisfaction his discovery that America was not, as he once thought, incapable of the evils he had heard were perpetrated by other countries. He had Ellsberg notes in the film, felt himself lucky to be the citizen of a country that did not make him ashamed of its capacity for evil and atrocity, until the Vietnam war taught him otherwise. Particularly My Lai, Ellsberg adds, which was "equal to any field incident in World War II."

To hear this from Ellsberg is, of course, to come directly into contact with the film's obtuseness, not only Ellsberg's own, which lets parallels of this nature stand. Ophuls is quick enough to intercede and ask corrective questions when the need is clear to him. (There is an altogether memorable moment when Telford Taylor murmurs that he was, of course, against the trial of Eichmann by the Israelis particularly since—as he falsely charges—the Israelis allow for capital punishment only for the murder of Jews. Instead of calling him on this falsehood, Ophuls compounds it. Isn't that a kind of racist law?, he asks, and Taylor responds to this encouraging suggestion with a quick affirmation.)*

To make My Lai comparable, as Ellsberg does, to any "field incident" in World War II, is to distort history by suggesting that there

*It is reported that Ophuls has now cut this sequence out of the film.

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is no difference between a random outbreak of officially condemned criminality such as occurred at My Lai, and an officially organized policy of extermination such as was carried out against the Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen* in every occupied territory of Europe. Nor is it surprising to hear this comparison of "field incidents" in World War II and Vietnam, for it is among the continuing passions of that part of the American political spectrum Ellsberg represents to discredit the idea of a unique evil perpetrated by Nazism and unequaled in history.

WHO are we to judge the Germans? That is the real question the film asks in its underlying search for equations and parallels in the world's category of evils. Its view is best summed up by what we may take, by its placement, to be the film's final word: Yehudi Menuhin's observation that in ideal justice, judgment should come from the person who committed the crime. Here the film's underlying, general hostility to Nuremberg, and more specifically to the idea of a morally triumphant America sitting in judgment on another power, is given its clearest voice—for surely by this standard, uttered at the end, Nuremberg's was far from the ideal justice.

In the last five years of the Third Reich the executors and the planners of the Final Solution went energetically about their daily business—that being the systematic murder of millions of men, women, and children—while pursuing their lives as heads of households, husbands, fathers, lovers. It was of course precisely because these were men in whom the capacity for feeling guilt had been diminished to nothingness that they were thus able to carry on—indeed, to excel in their work. That their existence in history and the deeds they, along with various others in the dock at Nuremberg, helped perpetrate should be turned over, as this film implicitly does in the end, to a judgment of the level it is given to us to hear from Menuhin, is to make a mockery of the facts of that history, not to say of the film's claim to seriousness.



# Brechtian Papp

*Jack Richardson*

A HALF-CENTURY has now passed since *The Threepenny Opera* was presented for the first time at the Schiffbauerdamm Theater in Berlin. During the years of German revivals and foreign adaptations, it has become clear that this patchwork of borrowings, imitations, and parodies has grown into Brecht's most popular work. Other plays of his—*Mother Courage*, for example, or *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*—may cut deeper into the economics, politics, and social compassions of life with which Brecht, as dramatist and Marxist, was concerned, but none maintains so workable a balance between drama and didactics as this *Lehrstück* about thieves and beggars who practice the morality of society while in the very act of breaking its laws.

That *The Threepenny Opera* is so frequently performed and happily received throughout the world is an achievement that many commentators on Brecht feel should be qualified by the fact that it has been generally misunderstood by the public that gives its presentations long runs and substantial profits. The misunderstanding, the commentators maintain, consists in the audience's seeing only a collection of amiable rogues bustling about the stage in situations that make their criminal and venal acts seem socially harmless. This audience—always posited by Brechtian purists as a collective, middle-class mind—fails to perceive that the entertaining thieves, whores, beggars, and murderers embody an attitude, social and moral, larger than that of the back streets of Soho, and that their betrayals, swindles, lies, and cold-blooded calculations are imitations of the methods used by a social system that laughs at a Mack the Knife in the theater, endorses his values in its commerce, and votes for his capital punishment in its legislatures.

Now while this point of view, which at once affirms the dimness of the theater public's mind and the precedence of politics over theatricality in Brecht's stage philosophy, possesses some basis of truth, it overlooks several important facts about *The Threepenny Opera* in particular and Brecht's work in general. The first of these is that Brecht the theoretician and Brecht the dramatist often give conflicting artistic testimony. Thus, for example, in Brecht's notes to performers of *The Threepenny Opera*, he states quite clearly that Macheath personifies the middle-class business ethic, that his distaste for bloodshed is based on the pragmatics of public relations rather than on any romantic outlaw morality, and that while he breaks the law, he also values it and the status quo it protects. Still, however acute and subtle this social analysis may be, it does not divest Macheath of his appealing swagger and delightful duplicities which Brecht created in a traditional dramatic manner and which, in performance at least, far outweigh Macheath's darker realities. If Macheath had only a social persona—if, that is, he had been fashioned without any artistic affection—then he might indeed be an unsettling chastisement of the system he and the audience supposedly share. However, as he did with the character of Mother Courage, Brecht created an aspect of human nature rather than an accident of economic theory. In so doing, he transcended his ideological principles and, happily for the audience, produced an image of life both laughably human and resistant to political rehabilitation.

This conflict between theory and practice also crops up whenever the purely theatrical values of Brecht



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are under discussion. His concept of epic theater, of alienating the spectator in order that he might observe, without emotional befuddlements, the dramatic arguments presented to him, has led to critical squabbles whenever a Brecht play is produced. If the interpreters are accused of performing in a tedious agit-prop manner, they inevitably respond with claims of faithfulness to the author's austere theatrical manner; and if they present a performance too rich with human and old-fashioned theatrical details, they are accused of traducement by Brechtian experts whose *bona fides* must always include at least a week's attendance of a Berliner Ensemble rehearsal.

Faced with such a dark antithesis of opinion, each production of *The Threepenny Opera* must be prepared for some disapproval. However, it is also a fact that, as in the case of Brecht's confounding his political and theatrical intentions, *The Threepenny Opera* is so endowed with basic stage virtues that it transpires charm even if encased in such a tentative mixing of styles and attitudes as the present Joseph Papp-New York Shakespeare Festival production directed by Richard Foreman.

THE issue of the right and wrong ways to perform and appreciate Brecht is joined in this presentation at the Vivian Beaumont Theater even before the play begins. A flyer, inserted in the program, entitled "The Real *Threepenny Opera*," informs the audience that, although Joseph Papp retains fond memories of the Marc Blitzstein version that ran for many years in the 50's at the Theater de Lys, he has since come to discover that it was not at all like the German original. In further explaining why he has gone to a new translation by Ralph Manheim and John Willett, he states that Blitzstein was guilty of "neutralizing much of the bite of Bertolt Brecht," and that although "the lyrics of Blitzstein may be more 'singable' than Brecht's rugged, gutter lyrics, they are clearly at odds with the dramatist's purpose and dramatic sensibilities."

He then gives the following examples of how, in his opinion, the earlier version softened Brecht, comparing them with the present production's translation. The first is from a song that the head of the beggars union and his wife sing; the second is from "The Cannon Song" sung by Mack the Knife and his old army buddy, Tiger Brown, who is now Sheriff of London. The German, omitted from the flyer, I have added.

*Blitzstein version:*

Instead of, instead of
Goin' about their business and behavin'
They make love, they make love;
Till the man is through
And then she's sorry that she gave in.

*Manheim-Willett version:*

No they can't, no, they can't
See what's good for them
and set their minds on it.
It's fun they want, it's fun they want
So they end up on their arses in the shit.

*Brecht:*

*Anstatt dass*
*Sie was täten, was 'nen Sinn hat und 'nen Zweck*
*Machen sie Spass*
*Und verrecken dann natürlich glatt im Dreck.*

The following, in the program, is prefaced by Papp's telling us how the new version restores important "references to colonialism and racism."

*Blitzstein version:*

If we get feeling down
We wander into town.
And if the population
Should greet us with indignation
We chop 'em into bits
Because we like our hamburgers raw.

*Manheim-Willett version:*

When they come face to face
With men of a different color
With darker skins or duller
They quick as a winking
Chop them into beefsteak tartare.

*Brecht:*

*Wenn es mal regnete*
*Und es begegnete*
*Ihnen 'ne neue Rasse*
*'ne braune oder blasse*
*Da machen sie vielleicht daraus ihr Beefsteak Tartar.*

Now to anyone who knows German, both the above translations are as far removed from Brecht's original as they often are from English. (The notion that "quick as a winking" captures Brecht's "rugged, gutter" quality, indicates an insensitivity to language on so many levels that one wonders if Papp even has a native tongue.) However, I did not provide the quotations simply in order to show how badly Brecht can be translated, or merely to challenge the arrogance of a producer who thinks that by mistranslating "*Dreck*" as "shit" he is giving us the "real" *Threepenny Opera* or that by turning "*blasse*" (pale) into "duller," he is restoring to us Brecht's hard-hitting ideas on the color question. All this could simply be based on ignorance, a quality that has clouded a good many Shakespeare Festival productions before this one. But when Papp insists on his fealty to Brecht, and then reassigns a song written for one character to another—a reassignment that proved in the Blitzstein version to have been successful—then one must suspect that Papp simply has no feelings about the text stronger than those that have to do with his desire for commercial success while maintaining his good standing in the community of jejune political commitment.

The reassignment I'm speaking of involves giving the well-known "Pirate-Jenny Song," originally sung by Polly Peachum at her wedding feast, to the whore Jenny, with whom Macheath, *à la* Villon, had once set up house in a bordello. Not only does the Papp production allow this switch of singers—which at least in the Blitzstein version had the virtue of giving Lotte Lenya an extra tour on stage—but it also has it performed in a lurid, tearfully-proud manner that changes a bitter little ballad of a working-class girl's dreams of revenge into something like a *Marseillaise* for the world's downtrodden whores.

BUT enough of Papp and his politics, theatrical and social. For when all the battles over the Brechtian contribution to *The Threepenny Opera* are done, one is still

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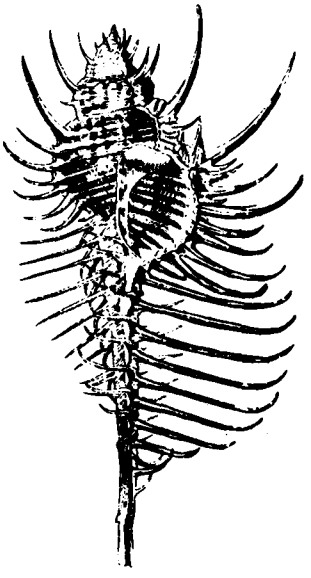
left with the extraordinary Kurt Weill score. As much as any of Brecht's innovations and lyrics, the dry, crackling melodies and sourly severe and ironic orchestrations have become part of one's long acquaintance with, and enjoyment of, this modern, urbanized opera. Recent history has tipped interest toward the text, but it may some day be seen that perhaps the most important fact behind *Threepenny*'s popularity is the unique musical structure that Weill found to encompass not only Brecht's, but also all the other voices from the worlds of outcasts and poetry that run through the text.

THE world of *Guys and Dolls*, though as marginal as that of *The Threepenny Opera*, is mercifully free from the burdens of theory and significance that can make even the expression of enjoyment a heavy critical task. Sky Masterson, Harry the Horse, Nathan Detroit, Miss Adelaide, Big Julie—these are characters from the land of Damon Runyon who pretend to nothing but an existence meant to entertain us. But such entertaining! Imbued with music and dance, they gather on stage to create perhaps the best musical comedy Broadway has ever produced.

Having seen the original, I could make a few critical comparisons with the present revival with an all-black cast that is now running successfully at the Broadway Theater. However, I will only say that, except for the number "Sue Me," the ethnic transition is smooth enough to make comparative caviling a barren impertinence. So I will put aside my analytic tools and say that although Lindy's may be gone, the complexion of its spirit, in spite of superficial changes, remains as colorful as ever. And as for Frank Loesser's songs—"Fugue for Tinhorns," "The Oldest Established Permanent Floating Crap Game," "I'll Know When My Love Comes Along," "Luck Be a Lady" —just naming a few of them should be sufficient for those who know the work to have grateful memories, and for those who don't to arrange immediately to see one of the real examples of theatrical excellence and intelligence.

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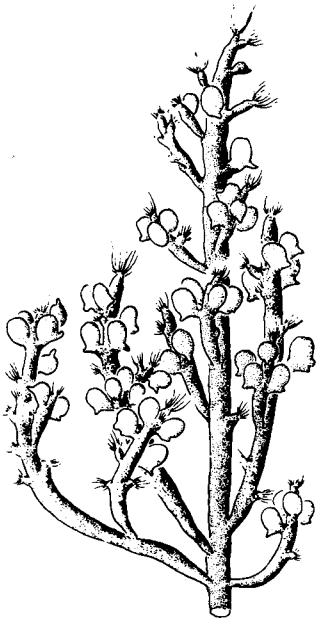

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# Books in Review

## Family Chronicle

ROOTS: THE SAGA OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY. By ALEX HALEY. *Doubleday. 578 pp. $12.50.*

*Reviewed by*
DAVID HERBERT DONALD

WHEN Alex Haley was growing up in Tennessee during the 1920's, his grandmother used to entertain him with stories about his ancestors. Her recital went all the way back to the days before the American Revolution, to the time when a man she called "the African" had been brought aboard a slave ship to a place she pronounced "Naplis." According to family tradition, this African forebear had called himself "Kin-tay," but the Virginia planter who purchased him renamed him "Toby." In a fourth unsuccessful attempt to escape, he was trapped by professional slave-catchers, who mutilated his foot so that he would never run away again. He mated with another slave, "Bell, the big-house cook," and they had a daughter called Kizzy. To this little girl "Kin-tay" told the story of how the slave traders had captured him when he strayed from his African village into the forest, and he drilled into her memory the words in his native tongue for half a dozen familiar objects, such as a guitar. When Kizzy was sixteen, family lore continued, she was sold to a small planter in North Carolina, by whom she bore a child called George. To this son she passed along what she could remember of her father's history. He transmitted the tradition to his children, and they in turn related the family history to their offspring, one of whom was Haley's grandmother. The stories that she told Haley, then, were part of an oral history that reached back seven generations—a period longer than the national history of the United States.

A journalist, Haley began thinking about the significance of this family lore when he started using tape recordings to prepare a biographical sketch of the jazz trumpeter, Miles Davis. Work on the book that was published as *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* strengthened his interest in oral history and also turned his attention to the African heritage of American blacks. He began to check and verify what he could of his family history. After repeated failures, he finally succeeded in having the handful of African words that had been passed along, with some distortion, through seven generations identified as Mandinka, a language spoken along the Gambia River. On a trip to Gambia he learned of a village named "Kinte-Kunda," which sounded close to the name "Kin-tay" of his ancestor, and he was told of the legendary *griots*, very old men living in the backcountry who were walking encyclopedias of local history. At the village of Juffure the *griot* recited for Haley the complex history of the Kinte clan, including that of Omoro Kinte, whose oldest son, Kunta, born about 1750, "went away from his village to chop wood . . . and he was never seen again."

Convinced that he had identified "the African," about whom his grandmother had spoken, Haley searched through shipping records in London and Annapolis to trace Kunta Kinte's arrival in America in 1767 and his sale to the Waller family of Spotsylvania County, Virginia. After that link was established, his job was largely a matter of working through census records to trace the family's migrations from Virginia to North Carolina and, after emancipation, to Tennessee. *Roots* is Haley's account of seven generations of his family, from Africa to America, from freedom to slavery and on to freedom again.

As the reconstruction of a genealogy, Haley's book is a *tour de force.* Like Herbert G. Gutman's recently published *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, it reminds us how even in appallingly adverse circumstances blacks often maintained, through oral traditions, a full account of their lineage and a proper sense of their individual identities. Skillfully, Haley checked his oral history against surviving written documents, and the family tree that he has outlined seems not just plausible but authentic. It is easy to accept Haley's statement: "To the best of my knowledge and of my effort, every lineage statement within *Roots* is from either my African or American families' carefully preserved oral history, much of which I have been able conventionally to corroborate with documents."

(Since Haley has been so successful in tracing his genealogy, perhaps a word of warning ought to be inserted for others who may be tempted to emulate him. Very few Americans, white or black, can hope to duplicate his triumph. Among American Negroes, the experience of Kunta Kinte, transported directly from Africa to British North America, was unusual. According to Philip D. Curtin's authoritative study of the Atlantic slave trade, fewer than 6 per cent of all slaves brought to America in the 18th century came immediately to the British colonies on the continent. Most tobacco and rice planters preferred slaves who were "seasoned"—i.e., who had spent at least a year in the Caribbean, adapting to the climate and the work habits of the New World. It would be virtually impossible to trace a slave who was brought from Africa to Jamaica, then sold, say, in Barbados, and later shipped to South Carolina. Haley's family was also exceptional in the precision of its oral tradition. Finally, it was a combination of persistence and good luck

DAVID HERBERT DONALD *is Charles Warren Professor of American History at Harvard.*



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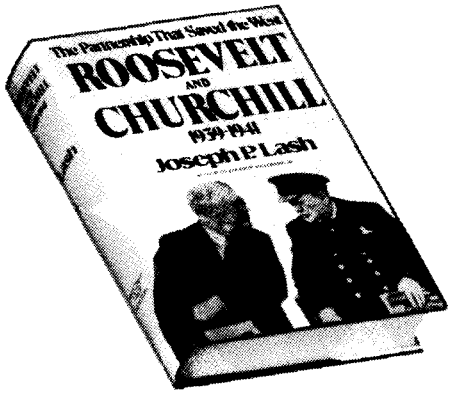


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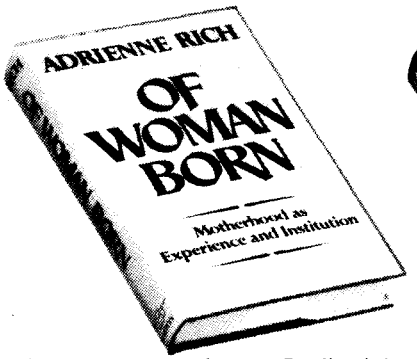


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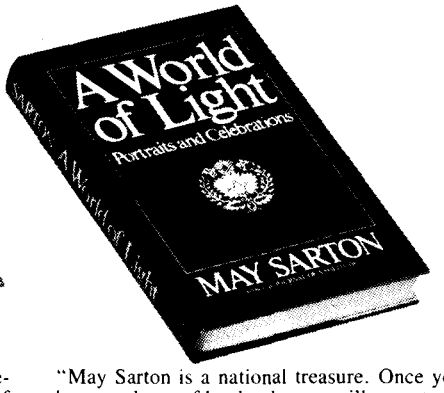


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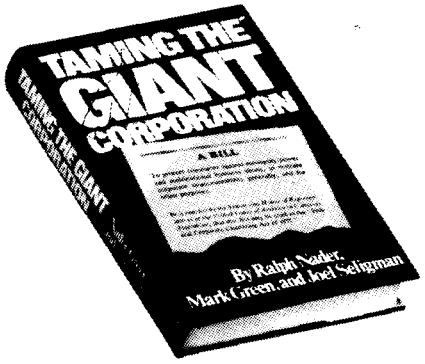


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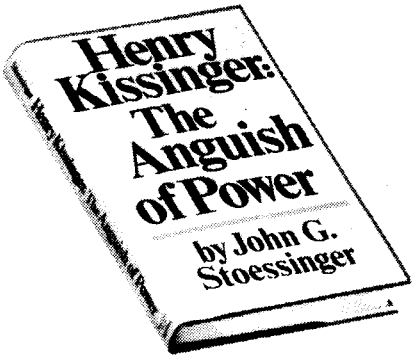


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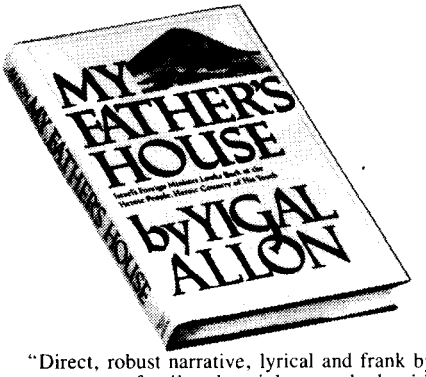


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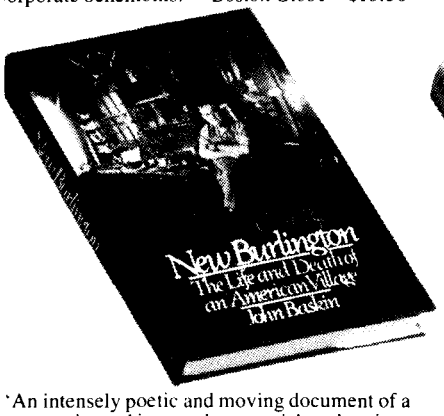


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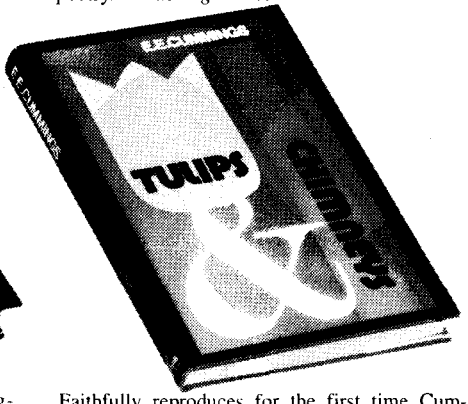


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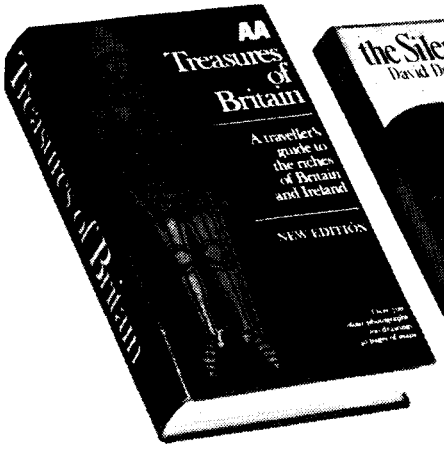


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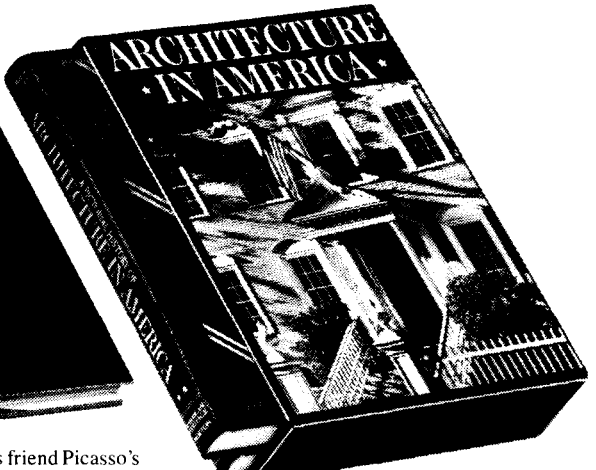


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that enabled Haley to link up his American and African oral histories and to corroborate key facts from written documents.)

Only the final twenty pages of *Roots* recount Haley's efforts to trace his family's history; the rest of this very long book is an imaginative account of how he believes his ancestors must have lived and acted. Haley admits: ". . . by far most of the dialogue and most of the incidents are of necessity a novelized amalgam of what I *know* took place together with what my researching led me to plausibly *feel* took place." *Roots* is, then, primarily a work of historical fiction, using the names of actual persons who were Haley's ancestors. Readers should not expect to find in these pages an accurate history of Haley's family, any more than they would look for a factually complete account of the Civil War in Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body*. In a work of this sort it is enough to have a high level of historical plausibility coupled with enough literary skill to make the characters credible.

BY THIS standard, parts of *Roots* come off very well. Since I am not an Africanist, I cannot judge the historical accuracy of Haley's reconstruction of Kunta Kinte's boyhood in an 18th-century Mandinka village. Perhaps for this reason I found this section of *Roots* both imaginative and persuasive. My colleagues who do know African history warn that Haley tends to romanticize the beauties and comforts of primitive society, and I suspect that had Haley's African safari lasted longer he might have written more about the dirt, the discomfort, and the danger of life along the Gambia. Haley's account of the Middle Passage—the dreaded voyage from Africa to America—is also a convincing recreation of that horror. There is no way of knowing whether the *Lord Ligonier*, on which Kunta Kinte sailed, was actually a vessel managed with such singular bestiality; but Haley's account of the crowding, the stench, the brutality, and the disease on such ships jibes with other accounts of the Atlantic slave trade.

Once Haley gets Kunta to America, however, the historical plausibility of his story begins to deteriorate. On page after page there are factual errors as well as distortions. No one of these in itself is weighty, but cumulatively they create disbelief. For instance, Haley says that Kunta was sold for $850 in 1768. Perhaps it does not matter much that his price would probably have been set in pounds, shillings, and pence (though Spanish dollars were sometimes used in local transactions), but it is troubling that the alleged price is nearly three times what Virginia planters were then paying for prime field hands—unskilled but able-bodied young slave men who, unlike Kunta, had already been seasoned. Bought by a Virginian, Kunta is promptly set to work "hoeing the grass from

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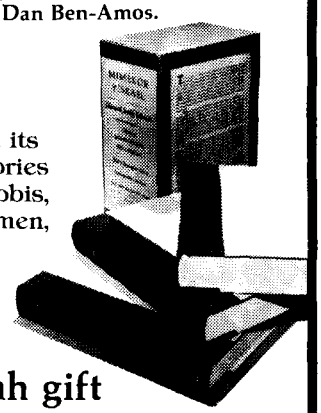

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around the waist-high cotton"—though virtually no cotton was grown in British North America in these decades before the invention of the cotton gin. From a fellow slave Kunta hears of "real big plantations with fifty or a hunerd slaves [along] . . . the river bottoms like in Louisiana, Miss'ippi, an' Alabama"—at a time when the Spanish owned Louisiana, and Alabama and Mississippi were populated only by Indians. Similarly in 1790, a slave friend tells Kunta about the rich lands of "de Yazoo Miss'ippi" and "dat black belt of Alabama, South Ca'lina, and Geo'gia"—thus anticipating patterns of settlement that were not to occur for at least a quarter of a century.

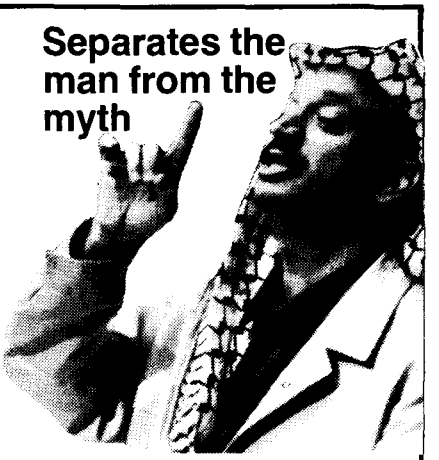
The most serious historical blunder in *Roots* concerns Kunta's grandson George—called "Chicken George" because of his skill in training gamecocks. In the 1850's when George's master loses a disastrous wager on his birds, he pays his debt by giving his slave to a visting Englishman, who takes him to Britain for five years to train fighting cocks there. Despite Lord Mansfield's 1772 ruling in the Sommersett case, announcing that once a slave set foot on British soil he became free, Haley has George remain a slave to the British lord. Sent back to America in 1860, George continues a slave, even though he stops off in New York, where the personal liberty laws would certainly have guaranteed his freedom, and he returns docilely to the South to entreat his master for liberty.

The point should be obvious: whatever Mr. Haley may know about Africa, he simply has not done enough reading about the South, about slavery, about American agriculture—to say nothing about general American history—to give his novel a convincing background.

Nor has Haley mastered the literary technique of historical fiction. Perhaps it does not make much difference that his characters are one-dimensional and wooden, for psychological subtlety can be as distracting in a historical novel as in a detective story. But it is awkward that the only way Haley can devise to introduce chronology is to have house slaves rush down to the quarters announcing the latest big-house gossip about Toussaint l'Ouverture, Nat Turner, John Brown, and the Emancipation Proclamation. It is awkward, too, that Haley has written most of *Roots* in heavy dialect. Not since Joel Chandler Harris has a writer had so many characters saying things like: "Less'n you niggers pick dis fiel' o' cotton clean fo' dat sun set, y'all ain't goin' git no mo' rations to eat."

Indeed, Haley's fictional technique closely resembles that of Harris and other such late 19th-century Southern historical romancers as Thomas Nelson Page, Mary Johnston, and James Lane Allen, and *Roots* should be read as a continuation of this hoary tradition—but with the racial signs reversed. In Haley's novel it is a black family of noble lineage, rather than a white one, that is spirited off to adventures in America. In *Roots* it is the blacks who exhibit diligence, loyalty, truth, honor, and a fierce spirit of stubborn independence, even though they are surrounded by degraded, disgusting whites. In conventional Southern historical fiction the worst thing that can happen to a white family is to have an admixture of Negro blood; in *Roots* the blacks fear the taint of white blood that would contaminate their pure African heritage. Just as traditional Southern white historical novelists wrote of "darkeys" instead of Negroes, so Haley can hardly bring himself to speak of whites but refers to them throughout as "toubob"—presumably a word of African origin. And finally, just as in the conventional Southern historical romance of the 1880's, Haley's family emerges from its trials unscathed, or rather ennobled, and at the end its members live happily and prosperously ever afterward.

SINCE we are all used to making allowances for the white racism that permeates so many 19th-century historical novels, there is no special reason why we should not be equally resigned to the black racism in Haley's story. The problem, however, is that Haley's racism leads to an unfortunate distortion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of his family's history. Admitting embarrassment that he himself is of mixed blood and feeling humiliated in the presence of truly black Africans, Haley is uncomfortable in dealing with the history of his family during the past hundred years, because that history is one of people with mixed blood who accepted, emulated, and excelled in the white American world. He prefers the story of his legendary, almost mythical, African ancestors to the fully documented history of his family since the Civil War. Only in the sketchiest outline does he tell us of the migration of that family as a unit to Tennessee, of their creation of a vigorous and prosperous new black community, of their economic success when one member became the owner of a large, well-managed lumber store, patronized by whites and blacks alike, so that members of the next generation could secure college educations. This is the real story of Haley's family, a typically American success story. That story of triumph over adversity would have been far more inspiring, as well as far more historically accurate, than any romanticized account of African ancestors.

## The Apostle as Jew

SAINT PAUL. By MICHAEL Grant. *Scribner's. 250 pp. $14.95.*

*Reviewed by* HYAM MACCOBY

AT THE beginning of Christianity stand two figures: Jesus and Paul. What was the relation between the two? Orthodox Christian doctrine is that Paul was the humble follower and faithful explicator of Jesus. Michael Grant's opinion is: "What the two men preached was quite different, and the Christianity that we have today is largely Paul's creation." Many would agree with this, but not necessarily with the same degree of admiration for Paul's "religious genius" and originality.

Even the opinion that Paul falsified and perverted Jesus's message can be held in very different ways. Nineteenth-century liberals, such as the French historian Ernest Renan, regarded Paul as an oversubtle rabbinical thinker who had overlaid the simple beauty of Jesus's ethical teaching and personal example with a hair-splitting and hair-raising system of theology. In this view, Jesus was the reformer who had cut the Gordian knot of Jewish super-subtlety, and Paul was the Jewish rabbi who had tied everything into rabbinical knots once more. The claim made in the New Testament that Paul was at first a Pharisee who had studied in the school of Rabban Gamaliel was taken at its face value and made the basis of a characterization of him as villain. The fact that all Paul's theology is directed *against* rabbinical notions of rationality and moral responsibility was somehow overlooked.

An entirely different way of regarding Paul as the villain is that which has been held by most Jewish students of Christianity ever since medieval scholars, such as Profiat Duran, began to study the New Testament instead of accepting at face value the Christian Church's account of what Jesus stood for. On this model, it is Jesus who is the Jewish rabbi, who never had any intention of setting himself up as a deity or of founding a new religion, while Paul is the perverter who turned the crucified Jesus into a god, declaring that the Law had come to an end and that the Jewish people had been rejected by God. Instead of an un-Jewish Jesus and a Jewish Paul, we have a Jewish Jesus and an un-Jewish Paul. But the end result is the same: Paul as villain.

Twentieth-century research produced some ironical developments, which, on the whole, have much improved Paul's image. First, Christian scholars moved away from Renan's "Jewish" Paul and developed a Hellenistic Paul. And more recently, Paul has reverted to being typically Jewish, but now in a way which is very much to his credit. Jewish scholars, however, have gone on thinking that Paul was un-Jewish, but nowadays are

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HYAM MACCOBY, *a new contributor, teaches at the Leo Baeck College in London and is the author of* Revolution in Judea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance.

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## NIMITZ

**By E.B. Potter**

The importance of this book and the man it depicts is perhaps best described in the first sentence of Chapter One: "In World War II, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz commanded thousands of ships and aircraft and millions of men, amounting to more military power than had been wielded by all the commanders in all previous wars."

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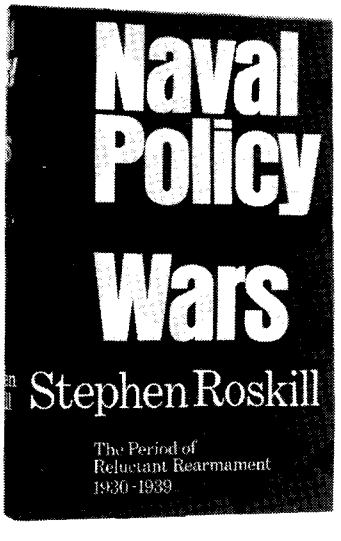


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prepared to be more tolerant about it.

Reitzenstein, Bousset, and other writers of the "History of Religion" school saw Paul as chiefly influenced by the "salvation" doctrines of the mystery-religions and the gnostic sects. This neutral, scientific approach was uncontaminated by any opinion on whether Paul had "spoiled" Christianity by getting it mixed up with Hellenistic spirituality. For Rudolf Bultmann, however, the Hellenistic Paul was also a theological necessity. For Bultmann, the permanent appeal of Christianity lay in its Hellenistic, not in its Jewish, affinities. Jesus himself (considered as a historical personage) faded into an insignificant figure, a simple, provincial Jew. It was Paul's Jesus who was the cornerstone of Christianity, not the actual Jewish Jesus who had taught and acted and proclaimed the kingdom-of-God-on-earth in Judea, but the cosmic savior-Jesus who descended from heaven, suffered voluntary crucifixion, and rose again, defeating the powers of darkness and delivering mankind from sin and the yoke of the Law. It was the mythological Jesus who interested Bultmann (since his famous "demythologizing" process required a myth to begin from); the historical Jesus, about whom he declared that very little could be known, was a relatively boring figure.

Not everyone set such a high value on Hellenistic mystical religiosity. Gilbert Murray popularized the idea that it represented a "failure of nerve." Its deep pessimism about this world, its abandonment of politics to the power of tyranny, its dualistic melodrama of Good and Evil, could seem both faint-hearted and vulgar. Christian theologians, after Bultmann's swing of the pendulum toward a Marcionite rejection of the Jewish heritage of Christianity, began to feel homesick for the Old Testament and Jewish rootedness in earth and sanity. After a period in which Paul was unashamedly called "the greatest of the gnostics," it began to be felt that Paul was not a gnostic at all, and should even be reckoned as a great opponent of gnosticism. He was, after all, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," and his wildest flights had a Jewish provenance. It was unnecessary, it began to be argued, to have recourse to Hellenistic sources for anything in Paul; it could all be explained from the Apocrypha, the Midrash, and the Talmud. W. D. Davies, in his *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1947), undertook to derive all Paul's innovations—predestination, vicarious sacrifice, original sin, salvation by grace—from his rabbinical background. And the subsequent discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, with their dualism and apocalypticism, seemed to make the task of re-Judaizing Paul all the easier.

PAUL has thus progressed, through several permutations, from being Jewish and bad (Renan) to being Jewish and good. Michael Grant, in *Saint Paul,* takes the current view, that Paul is Jewish and good. He assumes, with a minimum of argument, that attempts to explain Paul in terms of Hellenistic influences (absorbed in his youth at Tarsus) have failed. The root question of his book thus becomes, "How does a nice Jewish boy get to become a Paul?," and the upshot of his inquiries is, "By his radical rejection of the Law, Paul took a step which, as time went on, came to exercise an almost uniquely decisive effect on the course of history, religious and secular alike." Paul was "completely Jewish in education and outlook," and his story thus is of one who, in overcoming Judaism, overcame the world. This is to attribute a great dynamism to Judaism, if recoiling from it can produce such an effect; but one of the defects of Grant's book is that he does not explore this aspect, or explain why the overcoming of Judaism is a matter of such reverberating importance.

If Paul really were the rabbinical expert that recent modern theory postulates, he certainly would be a very interesting figure. But if one imagines, say, Elisha ben Avuyah, the great apostate rabbi of talmudic times, taking up his pen to attack the Jewish Law, the result would be something very different from Paul's Epistles. There is no solid evidence that Paul even knew the Hebrew Bible, since his quotations are all from the Greek translation, the Septuagint. An interesting example is the famous quotation (I Corinthians 15:55), "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?," which comes from the Septuagint of Hosea 13:14, where the Masoretic text has a different reading of almost opposite meaning. A more important example is Paul's use of the text, "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deuteronomy 21:23). Paul argues (Galatians 3) that Jesus voluntarily took upon himself this curse by undergoing crucifixion. An over-literal reading of the Septuagint could lead to such a view; but the rabbis read the text to mean, not that a curse fell upon a man who was hanged, but that it was an *offense against God,* in whose image man was made, to leave a dead body hanging overnight. The rabbis regarded judicial hanging as an atonement

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for the criminal's sin, not as bringing a curse (in hell?) upon him. Paul, so far from being a rabbinical expert, read the Septuagint in the manner of a highly intelligent but unscholarly Protestant fundamentalist, poring over Scripture and arriving at bizarre interpretations of his own. Nothing could be further from rabbinical thinking than to suppose that all the brave martyrs who suffered from the Roman policy of crucifixion thereby incurred a curse.

Grant's whole argument, however, is based on the fashionable (or once-more-fashionable) idea that Paul thinks like a rabbi. W. D. Davies wrote a whole book to prove this—and Samuel Sandmel, the American Bible scholar, wrote of it: "Davies's book is an admirable book, indeed, a great one—and one with which I disagree almost 100 per cent." Such wide disagreement among scholars, on what would appear a relatively easy matter to decide, suggests that deeper issues are at stake. Scholars cannot even agree about whether Paul's Greek style is that of a native Greek-speaker or not. For example, when Paul uses the unidiomatic plural "*ouranoi*" for "heaven," is this because he is thinking in Hebrew (*shamayim*), or because he is quoting from the Septuagint of the Psalms? Such arguments can go on happily forever among scholars. More likely to come to a conclusion are considerations based on Paul's thought and style of reasoning. For example, Paul's use of the *a fortiori* argument, in Romans 5, has been adduced to show his familiarity with the rabbinical *kal vahomer*. To my mind, it proves the opposite; Paul's *a fortiori* arguments are loose, rhetorical analogies, very different from the exact reasoning of the *kal vahomer*.

Grant, however, works in much broader terms than these. He is somewhat handicapped in his attempts to fill in Paul's Jewish background by having to rely on secondary sources. For example, he says that the Eucharist resembled "meals at Qumran [the Dead Sea community], accompanied by pronouncements that 'this bread is the Messiah of Israel.'" Though no note is given, the reference is clearly to the "Messianic Rule." It would be an epoch-making event if a Dead Sea scroll were found to anticipate the eucharistic idea of eating the Messiah. But no such expression as "this bread is the Messiah of Israel" exists in that or any other scroll. Grant has misunderstood something he has read. Paul's description of the eucharistic rite (I Corinthians 10:14-17 and 11:23-6) is the earliest in the New Testament writings. The idea of eating a sacrificed god can be found in many contemporary pagan sources; yet it is typical of the approach of the school to which Grant belongs that even this idea, which is utterly alien to Judaism, has to be attributed to Judaism. Grant quotes J. G. Davies: "The Jew, unlike the Greek, was not interested in things in themselves, but only in things as they are called to be. . . . Hence Jesus could say of a piece of bread: 'This


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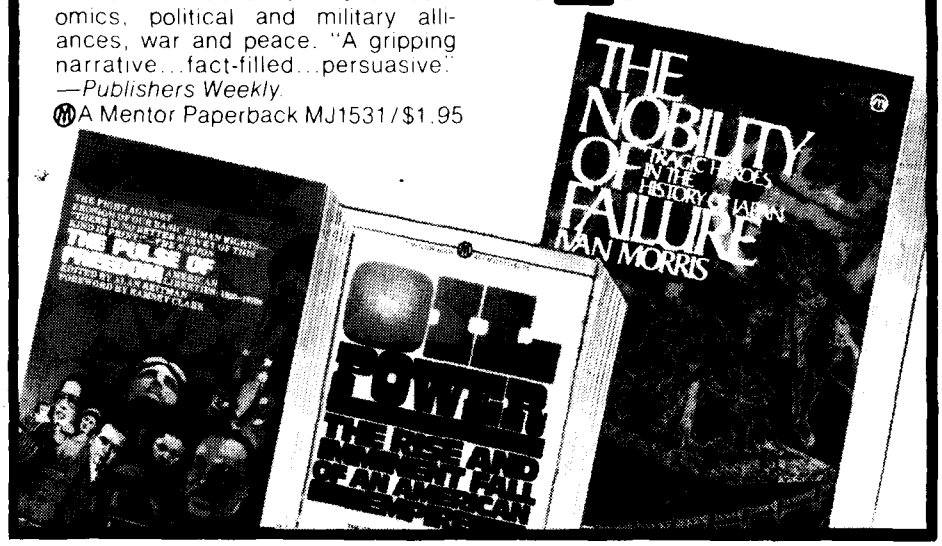



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is my body.' " Accordingly, the eucharist is not only Jewish, but *especially* Jewish! This is mere nonsense.

Grant does reject the legend, found in Acts but not in Paul's own writings, that Paul was a pupil of Rabban Gamaliel. Grant considers, on the contrary, that Paul learned his Pharisaism in Tarsus, and never visited Jerusalem until some time after his conversion to Christianity. But Grant never considers the possibility that Paul was never a Pharisee at all; that he assumed a Pharisaic background in order to impress his half-educated audience with his credentials as a critic of the Law. It is significant that Paul himself never mentions in his Epistles that he came from Tarsus. Instead, he describes himself in terms which, by false inference, imply a Judean background: ". . . of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. . . ." (Philippians 3:5). That Paul had at least a touch of the charlatan is something that Grant never allows to seep into consciousness. But unless one sees him as the spiritual ancestor of all those breast-beating hot-gospelers, arrogant and mock-humble in turn, cunning and flexible, but often carried away by their own surging eloquence into genuine belief, one has not understood at least one side of Paul.

Grant's study is altogether too respectful. For example, he suppresses the evidence of the anti-Pauline literature which somehow survived the censorship of the Church: the Ebionite denunciations quoted by Epiphanius and Irenaeus, the scarcely-disguised attack contained in the Clementine Homilies, and the Judeo-Christian anti-Pauline polemics revealed in the important document discovered by Shlomo Pines in 1966.* Any book on Paul should at least consider these texts; the time for dismissing them as "scurrilities" has passed. They reveal a very different Paul: one who was consumed by ambition and envy, and who constructed a post-crucifixion divine Jesus as a rival to the historical Jesus, whom he never knew, because this was the only way to assert his own authority against the apostles James and Peter, who were Jesus's lifetime companions. The Jewish Christians, who were faithful to the Law, regarded Jesus as a human prophet or messiah, and denounced Paul as a perverter of Jesus's message, deserve more than the passing mention that Grant gives them. He regards them as small fry compared with Paul: "It is very surprising indeed that the infant Church, with its mainly humble and uneducated adherents, should have suddenly acquired an apostle and prophet who breathed the terrific intellectual and imaginative power and exaltation of Paul."

PAUL, Grant is convinced, is the great genius whose breakthrough in thought produced vast revolutionary consequences. Yet Grant has some difficulty in explaining what exactly these consequences were, except by pointing to the success of Pauline Christianity in becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire. But may it not be that this great "success" represents the failure of Pauline Christianity to pose any threat to the values of the Roman Empire? Grant struggles with the criticism that Paul, by his removal of religion from the sphere of politics, was a reactionary; that he explicitly counseled submission of subjects to rulers and of slaves to masters. But no—he was really "deeply radical," and what is the proof? That his brand of Christianity eventually conquered the Roman Empire! It would have been more relevant to mention the German theologians who, almost to a man, cited Paul (and that great Pauline, Luther) to justify non-resistance to the Nazi state. When one reads Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one realizes what a tremendous effort it took to shake free

* *The Jewish Christians in the First Centuries of Christianity, According to a New Source* (Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1969.


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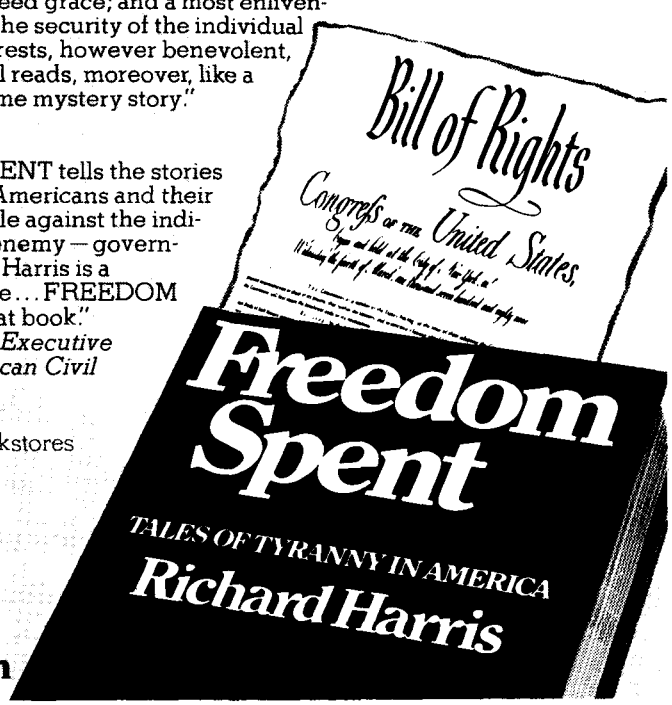


**Little, Brown**


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from Paul's influence in this matter.

As an alternative argument, Grant tries to locate Paul's greatness in his "universalism," by which he broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. It can be doubted, however, whether a scheme which condemns all non-Christians to everlasting hell is truly universal. Judaism's pattern of universalism, with its theory of a special *role* for the Jews among the nations, any member of whom may join the "nation of priests" by *vocation*, but may equally find justification under the less exacting Noahide laws, receives little appreciation or understanding. The considerable achievements of Jewish proselytism, on which Paul built his missionary success, receive hardly any acknowledgment. Grant's book is a competent and readable run-through of the current state of opinion on Paul. It should be read mainly as interesting evidence of the present unsatisfactory state of Pauline studies.

## Fuehrer

ADOLF HITLER. BY JOHN TOLAND. *Doubleday. 1035 pp. $14.95.*

*Reviewed by* JOSEPH SHATTAN

THE disparity between Adolf Hitler's enormous power and influence, on the one hand, and the repellent character of his life, on the other, poses a peculiarly difficult problem for the biographer. How did a semi-educated ex-corporal, whose ideas verged on the insane, become the absolute ruler of one of the most advanced countries in Europe? An easy way to answer this question is simply to dismiss it, and that is precisely what many biographers of Hitler have done. Hitler, they say, represented the summation of his times, he was the necessary consequence of profound social, economic, and cultural trends. Understand those, and you have understood him. Thus, most "biographies" of Hitler are, in fact, either social histories of the Weimar Republic or extended investigations of the "German mind." By defining Hitler as a socio-cultural phenomenon, historians are spared the difficult and painful task of actually coming to grips with the man himself.

John Toland's biography of Hitler takes just the opposite tack. Toland concentrates almost exclusively on the details of Hitler's life, major and minor, while ignoring the social, political, and cultural matrix of Nazism. This approach is not without its advantages, but the life of Hitler which we are finally left with is, in its own way, as incomplete and misleading as earlier versions.

Toland makes it abundantly clear that Hitler was a man of considerable talent and ability. He had a powerful and original (though very narrow) intellect and a photographic memory. His grasp of strategic affairs was, at times, superior to that of his generals. He could convey, in his voice and apparently in his very person, a ruthlessness and an intimation of boundless violence which many Germans, not least the intellectuals, found immensely attractive. Most importantly, he was a master of the art of propaganda; his notorious speeches, far from being spontaneous outpourings, were carefully thought out beforehand to achieve their desired effect. Toland's assertion that Hitler's grasp of crowd psychology "indicated that he had read Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*" is a little preposterous, but there is no doubt that, whether from his experience of German and British wartime propaganda at the front or from his observation of Karl Lueger's highly successful demagogic techniques in pre-war Vienna, Hitler had a real understanding of the psychology of the mass.

These qualities, which Toland stresses, demonstrate that Hitler was anything but what Joachim Fest, a previous biographer, called an "unperson." On the contrary, Hitler had real and substantial talents, and under different circumstances might well have made a brilliant career for himself in the

JOSEPH SHATTAN, *whose reviews appear regularly in* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals, is a doctoral candidate at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.*

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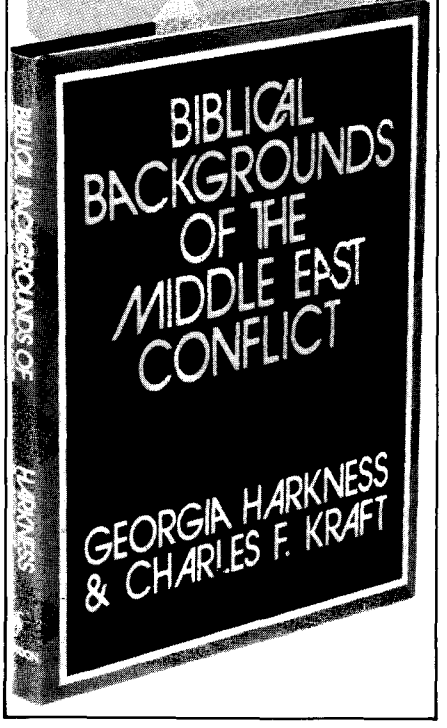


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German underworld. But taken by themselves, Hitler's talents do not explain his phenomenal rise to power. It is on this issue that Toland's study becomes seriously misleading.

"By mid-1933," Toland writes, "the majority of Germans supported Hitler." Indeed, "it seemed that almost everyone was for Hitler," whose magnetic personality and seductive propaganda were sufficient, Toland implies, to win over an entire nation. But Toland's account does not square with the facts. In no free election did Hitler or the Nazis ever gain a majority of the votes. By 1932, in fact, the Nazis began *losing* votes. Nor was "almost everyone" for Hitler. The working class (except for the unemployed), voting either Communist or Socialist, remained virtually immune to Hitler's "magic" (the term is Carl Jung's, cited by Toland), and Hitler eventually gave up trying to win it over, concentrating instead on his real source of support, the lower-middle class. By 1932, however, the Nazi party, in the words of the eminent German historian, Karl Dietrich Bracher, "ran up against those sociologically conditioned limits which . . . put an end to its further expansion." While it is impossible to explain Hitler away in terms of underlying social factors, such factors nevertheless set a fairly precise limit to Hitler's charisma.

Hitler's ultimate leap to power came about because an irresponsible clique of conservative German politicians (Papen, Hugenberg, Hindenburg) believed they could use Hitler for their own ends. "This tiny minority," Bracher has written, "through its ambitious, overweening alliance with the totalitarian mass movement, helped the National Socialists into those positions of power which Hitler could never have captured on his own." Once in power, of course, Hitler made short shrift of his erstwhile conservative allies, yet without their assistance he would not, for all his "magic," have come to power in the first place.

IF Toland's analysis of Hitler's rise to power is misleading, his evaluation of Hitler's behavior once in power also leaves much to be desired. Thus, he credits Hitler with holding a socialist ideology and argues that Hitler's achievements during his early years in office were truly "considerable and impressive." Apart from making the trains run on time, Hitler introduced a new spirit of egalitarianism into German society: "He strove to unite people of all social levels—except, of course, the Jews—and his brand of socialism excluded neither the wealthy nor the middle class." So impressive were his reforms that "if Hitler had died in 1937 on the fourth anniversary of his coming to power—the great economic crisis notwithstanding—he would undoubtedly have gone down as one of the greatest figures in German history."

Toland's concentration on biographical detail and his blindness to complex social reality have led him seriously astray here. Although it is true that Hitler carried out a number of reforms which appeared egalitarian in nature, those reforms were an essential part of his totalitarian program. As the German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf has written: "The National Socialists had to break the traditional, and in effect anti-liberal, loyalties to region and religion, family and corporation, in order to realize their claim to total power." Since the Wilhelmine social order was anti-liberal and anti-egalitarian, Hitler's reforms occasionally assumed a progressive mask, but their *intent* was plainly totalitarian: to establish Nazi control over all facets of German society by destroying every vestige of traditionalism, particularism, and independence. Hitler's early reforms were of a piece with the system of concentration camps also instituted during this "progressive" period. All were essential to the consolidation of the SS state.

Toland muddies the waters still further by his frequent references to Hitler's "socialist" policies. Like the Communists, the Nazis were allegedly committed to radical social change. Because they "shared similar socialist goals," Nazis and Communists often "fought together," says Toland. Apparently, Toland is unaware that Nazi-Communist cooperation stemmed solely from Sta-

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lin's decision, formalized at the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928, to brand "Social Fascism" (i.e., social democracy) the principal enemy of the proletariat. Since the Comintern had declared that "The main enemy is on the Left," German Communists, in joining with the Nazis to destroy parliamentary democracy ("rotten bourgeois liberalism"), were merely carrying out directives. Their cooperation was tactical, not ideological. The Communists believed that even if Hitler came to power, he would be unable to solve Germany's domestic problems and Nazi rule would thus form a convenient prelude to a Communist seizure of power. Like Papen and Hugenberg, Stalin thought he could use Hitler and the Nazis for his own purposes.

IT IS one of the merits of Toland's study that he demonstrates and abundantly documents the centrality of Hitler's anti-Semitism to his *Weltanschauung*. It might seem that after the murder of six million Jews this proposition would hardly require further proof, but unfortunately such is not the case. In a recent article, for example, Geoffrey Barraclough, the British historian, argued that there is really no conclusive evidence that Hitler was a particularly virulent anti-Semite: for all we know, Himmler or Heydrich might have been responsible for the Final Solution. The evidence which Toland has amassed to the contrary is overwhelming.

The trouble with Toland's discussion of Hitler's anti-Semitism, however, is that he treats it largely as a private obsession, relating it to Hitler's grief over his mother's death, which he unconsciously blamed on her Jewish physician and, by extension, on all the Jews. Hitler's "radical anti-Semitism," Toland argues, was very different from the "conventional anti-Semitism" of his fellow Germans. While "the resurgence of German honor and military might, the seizure of lost Germanic territories, and even *Lebensraum* in the East were approved heartily by most of his countrymen," the "great majority" of Germans "merely wanted a continuation of the limited Jewish persecution which had already re-


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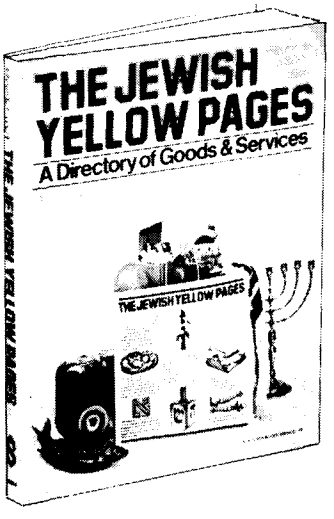


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ceived the tacit approval of millions of Westerners."

Toland's account is simplistic. "Of the conglomerate social, economic, and political appeals that the NSDAP directed at the German people," writes Lucy S. Dawidowicz in *The War Against the Jews*, "its racial doctrine was most attractive."

> Yet for the average National Socialist, and still more for the party's fellow travelers, out of the whole corpus of racial teachings, the anti-Jewish doctrine had the greatest dynamic potency. The reports of early NSDAP meetings reveal, from the record of audience responses, that violent attacks on the Jews provided orgasmic outbursts and that Hitler was most adept at getting the blood to tingle with his threats against the Jews. For the audience, the convolutions of Hitler's ideology were, in the end, reduced in significance to the timeworn slogan of German anti-Semitism: "*Jude verrecke.*"

The difference between Hitler's "radical anti-Semitism" and the "conventional anti-Semitism" of the vast majority of Germans, in other words, was not nearly so great as Toland makes it appear.

Finally, for all the personal data which Toland has collected, he himself appears not to know just what to make of Adolf Hitler. "My book has no thesis," he informs the reader in a foreword, "and any conclusions to be found in it were reached only during the writing." His "most meaningful" conclusion is that Hitler was "a warped archangel, a hybrid of Prometheus and Lucifer." In an epilogue, Toland calls Hitler "the most extraordinary figure in the history of the 20th century." Given his particular approach, this conclusion was bound to suggest itself. After all, a man who could, by the sheer force of his personality alone, radically transform an entire nation must surely in some sense be great. Once it is recalled, however, that Hitler's rise to power was related to a highly unusual social and political situation, as well as to an extraordinarily potent tradition of anti-Semitism, it becomes more nearly possible to see him as he truly was: a gifted fanatic, a magnificent sewer-rat, but far removed from any redeeming measure of greatness. During his lifetime Nazi propaganda apotheosized Hitler, creating the inspiring myth of an infallible superhuman. It would be a pity if John Toland's generally sober, engrossing study of his life contributed indirectly to a revival of the myth of the Fuehrer.

## Artist of the Middle

THE DUNNE FAMILY. By JAMES T. FARRELL. *Doubleday. 326 pp. $8.95.*

*Reviewed by* BARRY WALLENSTEIN

A LANDMARK in American literature has just been achieved with the publication of James T. Farrell's fiftieth book, *The Dunne Family*. Farrell is known as one of the major Chicago novelists, a naturalist, a modern classic. Yet in many people's minds, he has been locked into a dead-issue decade; his work is thought to be synonymous with the reductive struggles and frustrated ideals of the 30's. The irony is that during the 30's Farrell was not only popular and recognized, with his fiction praised in the leading journals, but a member of the avant-garde, and already looked upon with suspicion by the dogmatists of proletarian literature. In his critical writings during the "Red Decade" he considered writers not then in fashion, such as Joyce and Ibsen, and confronted issues, like the social functions of literature, with an independent spirit. Again and again he declared that literature

BARRY WALLENSTEIN, *a new contributor, is an assistant professor of English at City College in New York and co-editor of* Years of Protest: A Collection of American Writings from the 1930's.

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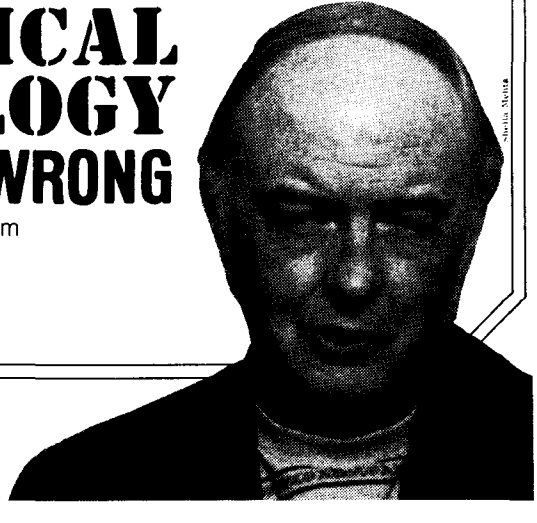

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lay beyond the dictates of any political program, however righteous.

The two series he is best known for, the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy and the *Danny O'Neill* pentalogy, books which prompted H. L. Mencken to acclaim Farrell in 1947 as "the best American novelist," are, in a way, works still in progress. His later books merely represent more recent installments in his huge *comédie humaine* of making it or going under in the many strata of the American middle class.

Farrell's predilection is for assessing the flat appearance of his characters as clues to their essential natures. The fact that he is less interested in their existential possibilities has separated him from the dark ironists of contemporary fiction, writers like Burroughs, Barthelme, Heller, and Pynchon. The current taste is for the novel as an exercise of wit that takes place on the edge of human experience, not necessarily congruent with "acceptable" reality, whereas Farrell's fiction rests on a belief that objective truth regarding the social as well as the psychological state of man is available and can be rendered in art. Given contemporary preferences, there is not much tolerance today for Farrell's serious chronicle of Middle America as it feels at the center, a region of the spirit as well as of time and place.

Though they are called naturalistic, Farrell's books do not present characters who are predetermined animals helplessly at sea among forces they cannot understand. Rather, these characters develop within a framework which encourages a study of their motivations. Farrell's underlying Marxism is another factor here, one which blocks the pessimism endemic to naturalistic fiction.

IN THE more recent books, the Danny O'Neill role as author's persona has been taken over by Eddie Ryan. Eddie says what Farrell has always believed in, that "his future depended solely on himself." The artist-hero hates moral or intellectual weakness and is a warrior in a moral battle. When Eddie chooses, at a pivotal moment, to go to the library instead of going home, he regards this first as simply a "symbolic gesture," but later calls the decision a "purely personal moral assertion." And in the new book a friend notes that he was "his own influence on himself"—a self-created creation—a model of freedom for the others who might seem tethered to economic and social conditions. In this light, even Studs Lonigan may be seen to have shaped his own unhappy life.

The aesthetic pleasures of Farrell's work and its ultimate achievement have specifically to do with the way he portrays characters who appear and reappear within the complex structure of his novels. His artistry lies in the total absence of a straining after effect; all the details, the empty talk, the inflated attitudes are attended to and selected with a sensitivity that knows the truth of "the middle" is a flat truth and one that must be suffered over a long time in order to sink in. Like Faulkner's saga of Yoknapatawpha, the work demands of the reader that he lose himself in it or else fall out of touch with its geographical and moral life. Entry into Farrell's world requires the same kind of suspension of disbelief we normally connect with less direct and less realistic fiction or poetry. To enter this somewhat unattractive world imaginatively is to expend more than reading time. By calling it up for our notice, Farrell demonstrates one of the moral functions of literature, its ability to make us care more than we thought we could for people who seem so far removed from ourselves, whose world seems such a rebuke to our own.

IN *The Dunne Family* Farrell shows again how variously he can generate sympathy without condescension for the stark, ordinary, sentimental life that is his subject. Grace Dunne, mother of five, grandmother of young Eddie Ryan and his brothers and sisters, is the focus of all attention in the family. Despite her fragility and old age, she is a lively, dominating presence in an otherwise moribund household in Depression-era Chicago. Her two middle-aged sons, Larry and Dick, like FDR's "forgotten men," are out of work and depressed during much of the book's

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action. They and Grace's spinster daughter all feel "cheated by life." Their mother's death midway through the novel serves to unite these three, who are isolated in their separate miseries, for it marks the emotional correlative of their own existence: in many respects they literally do lead "buried lives." Dick Dunne goes to Mass shortly after the funeral and finally has the realization, which feels almost like a vision to him, that his life is "sorely troubled" and has always been so.

Living barely above the poverty line, each of the three Dunne children gains some satisfaction from fantasy, "an ingrown life in a cluttered one-room apartment." These pipe dreamers are artful dodgers, rationalizers pressed by the need to invent masks and keep up images. The three are obsessed with upward mobility and the need to get free, but the passion of their obsession is flattened out in Farrell's language, which relies on cliché to bring home the pretext and self-deception necessary for even the modest success they do achieve. For instance, Larry is described as "on his way up in the shoe game." He is also a believer in the firm handshake and the power of positive thinking (in this he is a forerunner of Middle America's current infatuation with EST, TA, TM, etc.):

> Larry and Len both believed in seeing the bright side of things. They both believed in always giving the other fellow a boost, never a knock.
>
> "I always say this, Larry, if it's bad, the other fellow won't be glad to hear it."
>
> "That hits the nail square on the head, Len. After all, who enjoys listenin' to a crepehanger? God gives us a bright sunny morning like this for us to think bright sunny thoughts for ourselves and for our fellow men."

Farrell does not satirize this. There is no disdain, simply evocation. The Dunne family is a symphony of revealing clichés that become developed in Farrell's hands into full-blown metaphors of life in the middle:

> At sixty-one, Dick Dunne was still waiting for his ship to come in. The waters were rough and there was no abatement from the battering of the waves, but he still believed in the safe return of his ship with a cargo of rewards for him.

As these worn phrases float over the plot, they illuminate the condition of stasis in which the life of Farrell's characters is ineffectually lived. In a flashback Larry is observed thinking about whether or not to marry. "He sat and smoked a cigarette—this is a serious step. Look before you leap." Then Farrell flatly announces, "It was his intention to marry Edna Earnsworth." Larry does marry Edna, but his seriousness of intention is polluted by fear and ignorance, and when she dies he never acknowledges or even is aware of his responsibility for her death.

As Farrell's persona, Eddie Ryan, who is a writer himself, functions on the periphery of the plot. During Grace Dunne's passing and much of the family's troubles he is off in New York and Paris, becoming famous for his books which are not yet about the Dunne family. He is planning, however, to chronicle them after he has achieved some emotional distance. Eddie is in the story mainly to bring light and energy into the drab existence of the family. His letters are the only comfort to Grandma Dunne. When his first book arrives (*Studs Lonigan*, here called *Jud Jennings*), the Dunne household is proud and anxious at the same time.

Eddie and the purpose he serves are introduced early in the book when Jenny Dunne, musing over her hard and lonely existence, comes around to the terrible recognition that her life is meaningless and matters very little to anyone. "Who should care?" she asks.

> To Edward Arthur Ryan, it did matter. Edward Arthur Ryan was a young man determined to make it matter to as many people

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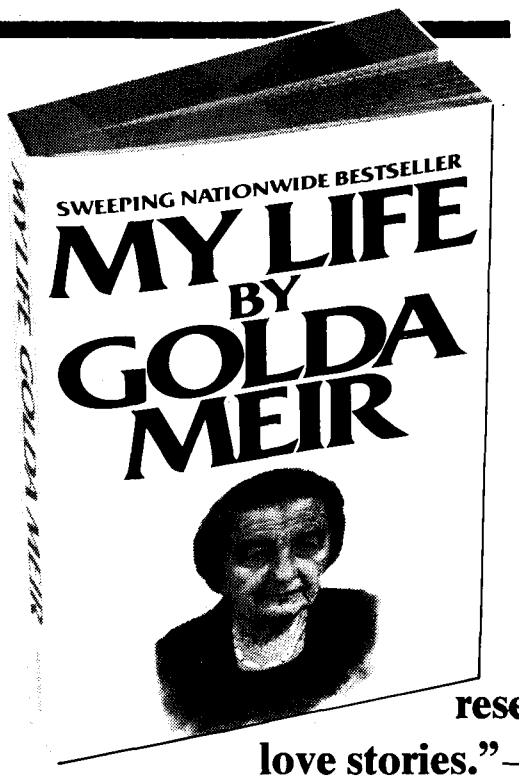


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in the world as he could reach. . . . It was not a case of Edward Arthur Ryan merely making the life of his Aunt Jenny matter; he would make as many lives as he could matter.

While this may sound calculating in the mouth of a young writer, it has always been Farrell's idea as a novelist to offer a perspective that encourages and rewards compassion in the midst of all the squabbles and battering, all the grief, misery, and hatred which characterize life in his world. This perspective informs *The Dunne Family* no less than its forty-nine predecessors, and for serving it faithfully Farrell richly deserves the measure of honor that has been coming to him in recent days.

## Growth & Resources

THE NEXT 200 YEARS: A SCENARIO FOR AMERICA AND THE WORLD. BY HERMAN KAHN, WILLIAM BROWN, and LEON MARTEL. *Morrow. 241 pp. $8.95.*

RIO: RESHAPING THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER. A REPORT TO THE CLUB OF ROME. Edited by JAN TINBERGEN. *Dutton. 325 pp. $10.00.*

*Reviewed by* BRUCE KOVNER

THESE two books are the newest entries into the debate over whether economic growth ought to be intentionally curtailed. The book by Herman Kahn and his associates is largely a response to the first two reports of the Club of Rome (*Mankind at the Turning Point* and *The Limits to Growth*), both of which had predicted world catastrophe unless radical reforms were introduced to limit the use of the earth's resources. *RIO* is the Club of Rome's third report. It continues the prophetic and pessimistic tone of its predecessors and reaches many of the same conclusions, but the emphasis of the new report is different. Whereas the first two reports regarded growth as the paramount evil, and economic inequality between nations as secondary, the new report has moved to the forefront the issue of the gap between rich and poor nations, with anti-growth sentiment taking up the rear. Whether this signals a fundamental change in the outlook of the Club of Rome is, however, another question.

*The Next 200 Years* is a short non-technical review of the evidence *against* the "neo-Malthusian" argument that population, pollution, and waste will make environmental disaster and economic collapse inevitable. The most striking of the neo-Malthusian conclusions (and one which, according to opinion surveys, is now widely believed by the American public) is that we are literally running out of mineral resources and fuels. This contention, Kahn and his associates show, is based on simplistic and misleading assumptions.

Dennis Meadows, one of the authors of the first Club of Rome report, had argued that, with the exception of iron, the earth's potential reserves of most mineral resources would last no more than from 17 to 137 years: aluminum, for example, would be exhausted within 49 years. But, Kahn notes, aluminum comprises some 8 per cent of the entire earth's crust, or roughly two million trillion tons. How could Meadows have arrived at such a startlingly low figure? As Kahn reconstructs it, Meadows's projection was based on a nine-year-old estimate of known reserves of bauxite, the high-grade ore which is now our primary source of aluminum. Meadows not only ignored larger estimates made in later documents, but neglected to mention that other sources of aluminum are available even if we should run out of bauxite. Indeed, the 1973 U.S. Geological Survey, a document used elsewhere by Meadows, concludes that "the nation has virtually inexhaustible potential resources of aluminous materials other than bauxite." As for other resources, Kahn and his associates conclude that the supply is probably inexhaustible for the twelve metals that constitute more than 99.9 per cent of world demand (iron, copper, zinc, chrome, lead,

BRUCE KOVNER *is currently at work on a study of pollution as a political issue.*

The noble dream and the great deed

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In quoting so liberally from so many sources, Lasky captures the historic immediacy of those fateful points in human affairs when the vision of a perfect society meets the movement toward violent social change.

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***"Architects of Yiddishism at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* is a balanced and eminently readable account of the gifted and sensitive men who launched Yiddishism as a latter-day faith, still reverberating in American Jewish letters as well as in daily speech."**
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nickel, tin, etc.). Moreover, for the relatively scarce metals like gold, silver, and mercury, recovery and recycling are technically feasible and (increasingly) economically attractive.

Kahn also argues (following projections made by the UN and many demographers) that population growth will not continue to accelerate (as the limits-to-growth documents had envisaged), but will decline and eventually reach an equilibrium at between 15 and 30 billion. The reason for this leveling-off will not be famine and pestilence, but rather the effects of economic and technological development. In pre-industrial society, birth rates were determined largely by local conditions; later, with improvements in public health, a rapid rise in population became possible. But in mature industrial states birth rates have now declined dramatically; in some countries, birth rates have fallen below the level needed to maintain equilibrium. Many demographers and economists believe that the same kind of "demographic transition" is occurring now in developing countries as well.

As for energy and food—two more of the Club of Rome's hypothesized limitations to further growth—their supply is more a matter of the price we are willing to pay for them than of a fixed limit based on world resources. The earth still has huge reserves of fossil fuels; shale oil alone could probably meet world energy needs, according to Kahn's estimates, for perhaps four hundred years. Moreover, fusion and solar power, both of which, scientists believe, will become economically feasible within a century, would each be capable of supplying the world's energy needs indefinitely.

Similarly, Kahn argues that food production is constrained much more by technology, capital, and social organization than it is by fixed resources like land and water. Perhaps only one half of the arable land in the world is now used for food production; four to five times that amount could probably be made arable. In all, Kahn estimates that, without assuming technological breakthroughs, the adoption of known techniques such as multicropping, improved use of fertilizers, irrigation, and the use of high-yield plant varieties could increase food production by a factor of at least twenty, and perhaps much more. Whether this *will* be done, particularly in the developing nations most in need of such change, is another issue, but it *can* be done.

GIVEN the expressed desire of the Club of Rome to stimulate discussion concerning world poverty, it would have been most useful if its third report had come to terms with the analysis offered by Kahn and other serious critics. But the report does not even try; it considers no criticisms and weighs no new evidence. In fact, *RIO* is intellectually not a serious document at all, but rather more in the style of a campaign platform, drawn up, at a dear cost in consistency and logic, to satisfy the various constituencies of its authors. It was prepared by a committee of twenty-one members carefully chosen (according to the preface) to achieve a balance among "the First, Second, and Third Worlds." As it turned out, the Second World, that is, the Communist powers, declined to participate. How well Jan Tinbergen, the coordinator of the committee, has been able to accommodate the conflicting views of the other participants cannot be ascertained from the document itself, but fourteen of the twenty-one have chosen to write individual dissenting opinions, which are appended to the report.

The *RIO* group was formed at the suggestion of the Club of Rome for the purpose of elaborating on the program of the "New International Economic Order" called for by the Sixth Special Session of the UN General Assembly. Following the declarations of that Assembly the report reaches eighty-three "medium-term" recommendations on a long list of subjects, from ocean management to arms control. The recommendations include proposals to insure high prices for commodities exported by developing countries, to "democratize" the operations of the UN Security Council to encourage the formation by developing countries of commodity

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cartels ("producers' associations"), to phase out national-reserve currencies and replace them by paper assets "created by joint decisions and used . . . with emphasis on the financing of development in the Third World," and to require all (rich) nations to contribute .7 per cent (later one per cent) of their gross national product to foreign aid.

At first glance, *RIO* appears to be a significant departure, perhaps a repudiation, of the limits-to-growth position. For one thing, the new report discreetly concedes that previous accounts of shortages of mineral and energy resources may have been exaggerated. For another, although the laundry-list of recommendations does include calls for environmental improvements, one is the certainty of previous reports that pollution constitutes an imminent threat to the world's well-being. ("While the rich world is concerned about the impact of its pollutive activities . . . the poor world is concerned about the pollution of poverty. . . .") Moreover, the principal recommendations of the report are concerned not with slowing economic growth, but with increasing the wealth and power of the poor.

Yet all this may be more a change in plumage than in underlying argument. The report is pro-growth for the developing countries, but it is still anti-growth for the rest of the world. According to the authors, growth in rich nations has become a Pandora's box, creating enormous waste that deprives the poor of their rightful share of the world's wealth. They call for the rich nations to abandon their growth "philosophy" (as the report calls it), and to reduce production and consumption—including, especially, meat consumption—to a level commensurate with their share of the world's population rather than with their share of wealth. "Ultimately," the report includes of the rich nations,

> they must aim to construct their policies on a series of "maxima" which define an appropriate style of civilized living in a world of deprivation and declare that all consumption beyond that fixed by the maxima is not only waste but a conscious action against the welfare of large numbers of poor and disprivileged, their own children, and the prospects for a peaceful world.

If this conclusion is anything more than intentional obfuscation, it is a return to the zero-sum logic of previous Club of Rome reports. Why else the assertion that today's consumption hurts both the poor and the generations of the future? Why, for that matter, the ceiling on meat consumption in the West? The implicit assumption here is that grain utilized in the production of meat for the rich countries would have otherwise found its way to those who need it in the developing world. If this were true, it would indeed be a strong argument for reducing meat consumption in the West.

In fact, however, if Americans stopped eating meat, demand for grain would fall, prices would drop, production decline, and less grain would reach the market. As Kahn and his associates suggest in *The Next 200 Years,* it is entirely possible that high meat consumption by the rich has *helped* the poor nations. The huge grain surpluses produced by the U.S. and made available to the developing world either through the market or in aid programs were to some extent a product of the high demand induced by meat-eating. Even the agricultural technology now used to help developing countries improve their food production may be traced in part to the high demand brought on by American tastes for meat and by other "wasteful" proclivities.

*RIO*'s principal recommendations aim at transferring resources and power to the developing nations, particularly by means of foreign aid ("concessional assistance"). The main rationale for increased foreign aid is that it will help keep the peace by reducing injustice and, with it, the likelihood of armed conflict. Unfortunately, neither history nor the course of current events offers much hope that as nations grow rich they become more pacific. On the contrary, wealth provides the means to


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acquire armaments that had previously been limited in number and scope. Moreover, it is far from clear that foreign aid actually leaves the recipient better off. The most successful cases of economic development in this century—the Soviet Union and Japan—have made their way without foreign aid and in the face of international hostility. What was "taken" from the rich nations was knowledge, technology, information, capital, and—eventually—mutually beneficial trade relations.

In contrast to the *RIO* report, Kahn and his associates cite foreign aid as the last in a list of ten factors that may help speed economic development for the poor nations. The reason for their low estimate is not only that the amount of such contributions is inevitably small in comparison to needs, but also that there is little reason to believe that aid is beneficially integrated into the development process. On the contrary, it is possible that foreign aid retards economic development by misdirecting government policies, breeding corruption, and creating an attitude of dependence.

IN THE end, what separates the authors of *RIO* from Kahn and his associates is more than disagreement on mineral resources, food, or foreign aid. Kahn sees that current economic institutions have created great wealth; *RIO*'s authors see great poverty. Kahn emphasizes that the next two hundred years will lift the developing nations from impoverishment; *RIO*'s authors stress that the future shows no promise of eliminating the disparity between the rich and poor. Kahn believes that current economic and political institutions are capable, with adjustments, of coping with the problems of the foreseeable future; the *RIO* authors believe that radical, indeed revolutionary, change is necessary. These views reflect a fundamental difference in the political and moral predispositions of their holders.

*The Next Two Hundred Years* performs a valuable service by critically scrutinizing anti-growth attitudes and arguments. But it may be doubted whether the book will find much favor. Over half the American population, according to opinion surveys that Kahn quotes, now believes that continued "wasteful" consumption in the United States will bring a decline in future living standards and that the disparity between the size of the U.S. population and its relatively large consumption of minerals is harmful to the rest of the world. Moreover, to judge by the reaction of the press and popular journals, predictions of catastrophe and calls for radical transforma tions in the international order sui the mood of many contemporar intellectuals.

WHEN the reports of the Club o Rome were aimed primarily a avoiding an alleged ecological di aster, their insistence on limits-tc growth may have had a certain ir ternal logic. But if the develo ment of poor nations is now th primary consideration, the ant growth bias is seriously misplace For it is the "wasteful" consume oriented economies of the rich n tions that have created the boo market in basic commodities fuels, metals, and other natural r sources—which now sustain mar developing countries. And it is th economic requirements of i dustrial growth in the Weste economies that have created va wealth among poor nations whe there was none before—the o riches of the Arab world are on the most obvious example. By r ducing demand for these commod ties, low-growth policies would r tard rather than aid econom development of the poor. The fai ure of the authors of *RIO* to con to terms with this fundamental co sideration is a failure especially f the poor nations, for they will be most heavily the consequences the policies here prescribed.

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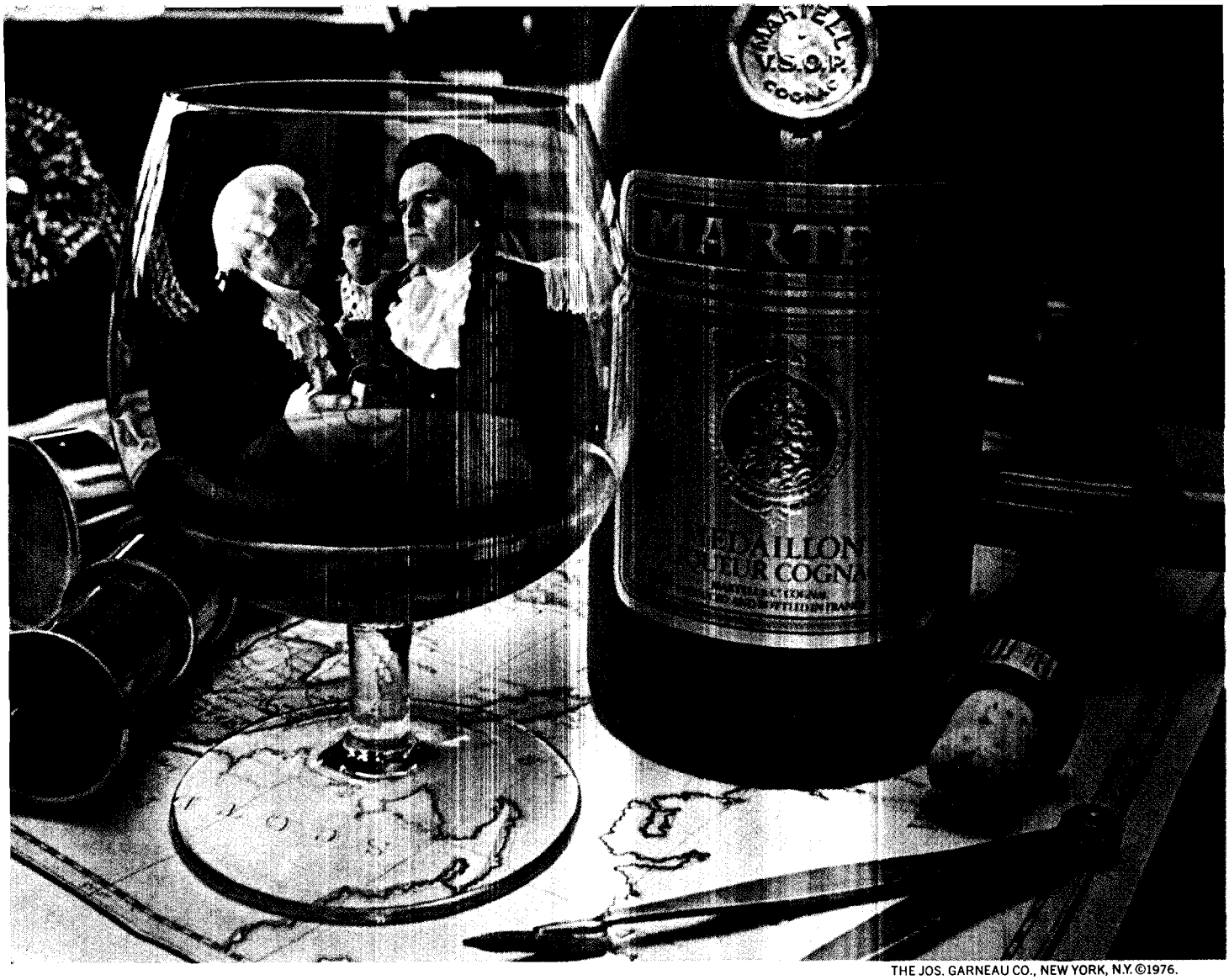


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by Allen Mac Kenzie

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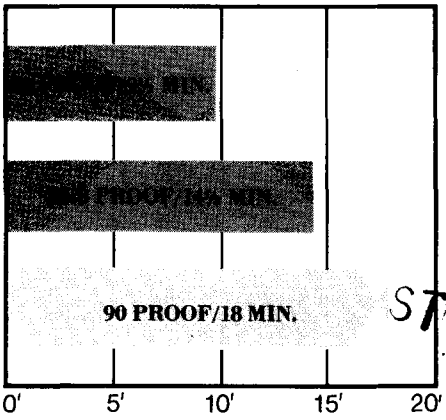


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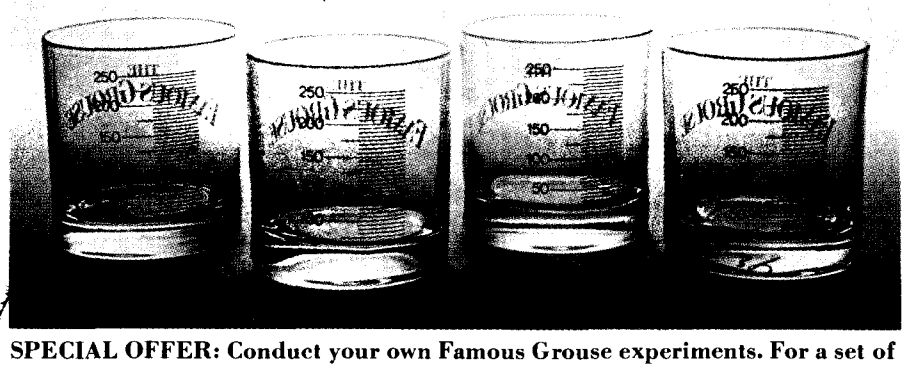

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